

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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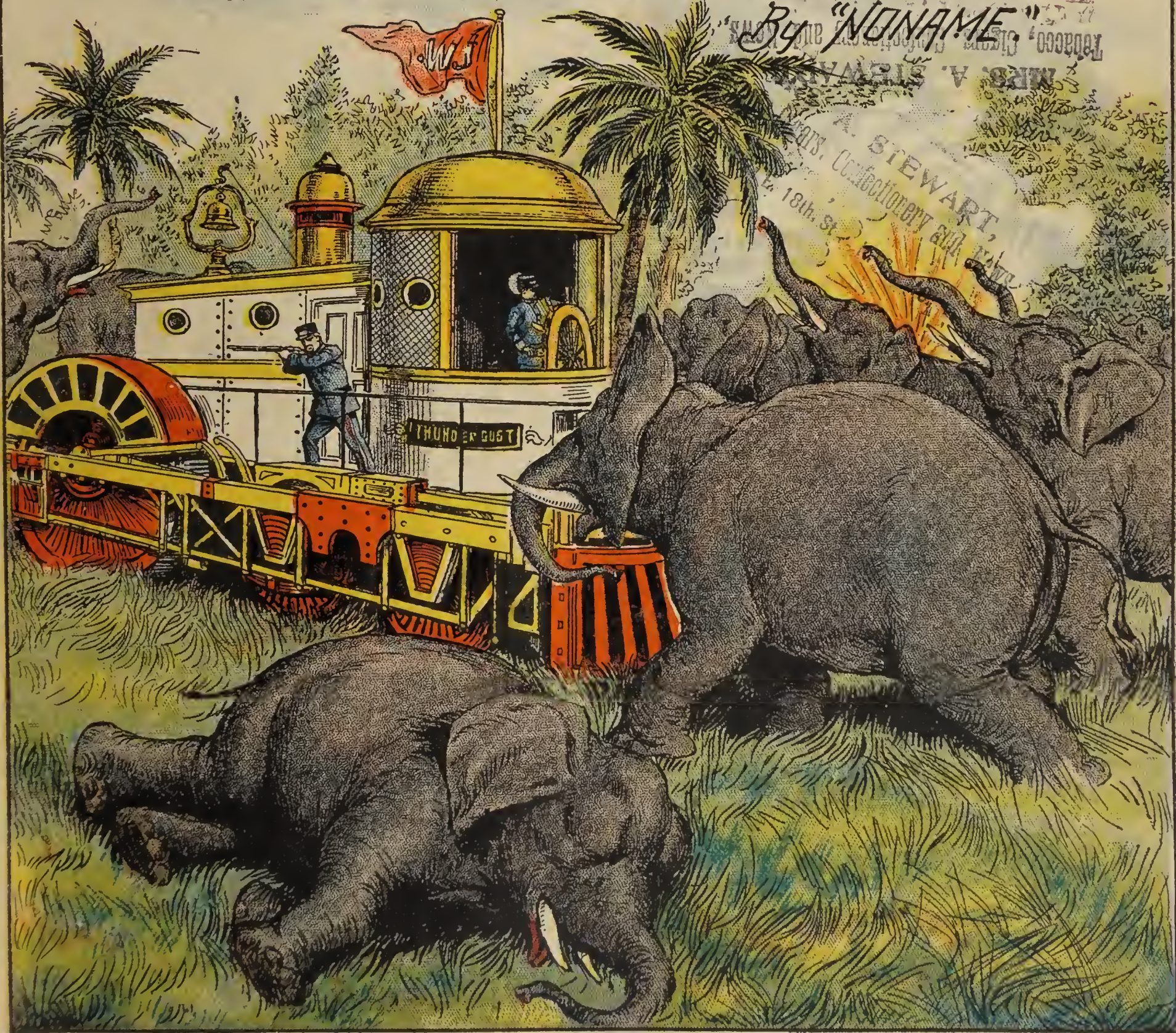
No. 245.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 11, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

JACK WRIGHT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE; OR, THE LOST MINE OF DEATH VALLEY.

By "NONAME."



The elephants in front began to slowly approach, their long trunks swaying to and fro, their enormous ears raised, and their ugly glances fastened on the Thunder Gust. "An attack!" exclaimed Jack. "These beasts are terrible when aroused."

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JACK WRIGHT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

A FIGHT WITH PIRATES.

Late in the afternoon of a pleasant day of October, a magnificent steam yacht named the Sea-Lady might have been observed slowly making her way along the Malay peninsula, in the Gulf of Siam, going toward Sungora.

She was painted black, her ropes were neatly coiled, the brasswork was highly polished, her crew of thirty able-bodied seamen were handsomely clad in natty blue uniforms, and her appointments betokened the owner's great wealth.

He was a dashing young American, named Jack Wright, and had gained a large fortune, and extraordinary fame, as an inventor of submarine vessels, overland engines, flying machines, and a variety of mechanical, electric, magnetic, galvanic and other devices.

The object of his cruise to those waters had been to define certain geographical coastlines, in the interests of the United States, combined with the mapping of a boundary between the countries of India and Siam.

Having accomplished the first part of his important work, the young inventor was heading for the river Menam, to reach the city of Bangkok, where he proposed to leave his yacht, while he continued his investigations by means of an electric locomotive of his own invention, which was then stowed in sections in the hold of the Sea-Lady.

Jack was then standing in the bow with a powerful field glass to his eyes, intently scanning the coast ahead of the yacht.

He was a very strong fellow, clad in navy blue, his jaunty cap covering a mass of dark hair, his thin, angular features burned brown by the sun, and his coal-black eyes sparkling with the high spirit that marked his nature.

Apparently satisfied with his survey, he turned to an old sailor with a sandy beard and a glass eye, who stood in the turret steering.

"Tim Topstay!" he sang out

"Ay, ay, my lad!" replied the old seadog.

"Port your helm and let her run. There are no shoals here."

"Werry good!" assented the other, turning the wheel and ringing the engineer's bell.

Tim was an old friend of Jack's, and from the time the young inventor made his first voyage, he had been associated with him.

Gliding along swiftly, the yacht now turned into Pulo Tantalum, the shores of which island were fringed with palms and tropical vegetation.

A moment afterwards a little fat Dutchman, named Fritz Schneider, came out of the cabin, smoking a pipe.

He lived with Jack, as the old sailor did, when ashore, and from the first had accompanied the young inventor's voyages and was a good electrician, but of a pugnacious disposition, and loved to play the accordeon.

Fritz had watery blue eyes, a round, fat face, yellow hair, and a huge stomach, and he was as true and devoted to Jack as Tim was.

"Vell, I should shmile, if I wouldn't like to got me mine hants on der monkey, Vhitskers!" he growled when he caught sight of Jack.

"What did Tim's pet do to you?" laughed the young inventor.

"Vot he done? Shiminey Christmas, looker mine nose alretty. Don't yer see the map of Bulgaria skretched by id? Dot's vot he doood."

"Why did you let him, you big fool?"

"Lieber Gott! How I dot could helb, vunct? He was mit mine parrot, Bismarck, been fighdin, und I vented to seberade dem, vhen all at once der monkey gib me a swat in der snoot, and dot saddles id."

Jack burst out laughing at him.

The monkey and parrot had been caught in Africa by their owners, and they spent most of their time fighting with each other.

The shadows of twilight had been falling fast.

As the beautiful yacht reached the end of the island, Jack was suddenly startled to hear the muffled report of a gun

coming from the leeward, followed by a piercing shriek of agony in human tones.

"Great Heavens!" he muttered, starting, frowning, and glancing swiftly around. "What was that?"

"Help!" screamed a wild, frantic voice in English, the tones faint and indistinct from the distance. "Steamer ahoy! Help! Help!"

Every one on the yacht now heard the frantic appeal, and rushing to the port bulwarks, peered over to the shoreward.

In a moment more, Jack beheld a thrilling sight.

A white man, clad in ragged clothing, his grey hair and beard grown long and unkempt, was seated in a sampan, rowing with might and main for the yacht, and pursued by two Malay junks.

From the decks of these vessels, the natives were pouring shot after shot from rifles and pistols at the man in the boat.

Riddled with bullets, the poor wretch was paddling and rowing on with his fast expiring strength, in a frenzied effort to reach the yacht and escape the dusky, black-haired rascals who shot at him.

"Merciful powers!" gasped Jack, in tones of horror, "they are murdering that man. Tim, come about! Run them down! All hands arm yourselves! I'll save him or die!"

Away rushed the sailors with alacrity to obey.

Around swung the yacht and off she started toward the fugitive.

On came the pirates, for such they were, the high poop-decks swarming with scores of the rascals, and a light wind driving their remarkably fast boats along swiftly.

The firing at the white fugitive continued.

In a few moments more Jack's sailors came rushing on deck, armed with air rifles of the young inventor's make, that carried ten shots apiece, the bullets being loaded like bombs with a high explosive.

They poured several volleys at the Malays, momentarily checking their assault upon the fugitive.

With the respite, the poor wretch managed to reach the hull of the Sea-Lady, and the sailors pulled him up on the deck.

He was bleeding from a dozen frightful wounds and no sooner realized that he had been saved than he fainted away.

The Malays uttered a furious yell upon seeing him escape, and in a fit of malice and revenge, they now turned their weapons against the dauntless crew of the yacht.

"Down behind the steel bulwarks!" shouted Jack, who feared injury to his gallant crew. "Down, down! Every one of you!"

Accustomed to the strictest discipline, every man complied.

Shot after shot roared from the weapons of the pirates and rattled like hailstones all over the Sea-Lady.

In the meantime, the junks kept gliding rapidly toward the yacht, and, seeing that they intended to attack the Sea-Lady, the young captain hastened down below.

Under his manipulation, a masked porthole in the bow flew open, and he protruded the muzzle of a singular looking pneumatic gun.

Thrusting a long, cartridge-like cylinder into the breach, he locked it, aimed it at the nearest junk, and pulled the lever.

A thud of escaping air and a scream from the escaping projectile followed, as it described a curve in the atmosphere.

The brass shell was loaded with Horrorite, as Jack's new explosive was named, and the moment it struck the junk, it burst with a thunderous report that could have been heard miles away.

All the forward section of the junk was ground to pieces

and hurled hundreds of feet in the air, carrying along the torn and mangled bodies of a score of the pirates.

Crying out in terror, as the ruined junk sank beneath the waves, the remainder of the crew were left swimming on the water.

Once more the terrible gun was loaded.

Jack aimed at the second junk, which had tacked away as soon as its crew observed the appalling power of those famous shells.

A hearty cheer pealed from Jack's crew.

Having the weapon in readiness, the young inventor discharged it.

The junk had caught a cat's-paw of wind that swept her along, and the rise of a wave under the yacht caused the deadly shot to whistle above the hull of the junk and strike the mainmast.

It carried away the huge bamboo and its sail of matting, but the junk swept out of sight a moment later behind a jutting strip of land, frustrating Jack's desire to fire again.

He drew in the gun, closed the port and then returned to the deck.

"Donner und blitzen!" gasped Fritz, all of whose pugnacity was aroused. "Shase 'em, Shack! Don'd yer see dot dey got away?"

"Let them go! They are sufficiently punished for their assault upon this man. Return your weapons to the armory, boys! Hey, Tim. Let her fall on her course again!"

"What is to be done with this poor fellow, sir?" asked the first officer.

"Have him carried into my cabin and attend to his wounds."

After this had been done, the stranger was revived.

When Jack went in and glanced at the pale, pain-distorted face, he shook his head gravely, for he had no hopes for the man's life.

"Hé won't live an hour, poor fellow!" he muttered.

None of the bullets penetrated a vital spot, but the wounds he received were of such a nature that a fatal result seemed almost positive.

The stranger saw Jack looking at him and feebly beckoned the young inventor to approach nearer.

"You fear I will die?" he muttered, hoarsely.

"I can see that your injuries are—are—serious——"

"Fatal, you meant to say."

"Why did the Malays attack you?"

"To get these."

The poor wretch thrust his trembling hand into the bosom of his ragged shirt and drew out an old handkerchief tied in a bundle.

It was insecurely fastened.

His action caused it to open entirely.

To everybody's intense astonishment, a rain of huge, magnificent uncut diamonds fell from the package to the floor.

"Thunder!" gasped Jack. "Where did you get all those gems?"

"In the great Siamese Death Valley. I alone know where."

"Whereabouts is it?"

The stranger essayed to speak.

But his further utterance was cut off abruptly.

A strange gasp and a rattling sound escaped his lips.

Jack was startled—bent over him—scanned his face.

"He is dead!" he exclaimed, suddenly recoiling.

Every one of the sailors respectfully took off their hats.

"Gone!" muttered the mate, "and he carried the secret of where he got the gems, with him."

"The diamond mine of the Death Valley is lost," said Jack.

And he drew a sheet over the corpse as the sailors silently filed out.

Left alone with the corpse, Jack stooped over to pick up

one of the diamonds from the floor, intending to examine it more closely, when he caught sight of a small memorandum book lying in the folds of the handkerchief on the floor.

It aroused the young inventor's curiosity and he picked it up, opened it at the first page, and observed that it was filled with pencil writing in the form of a diary.

Reading a small portion, he found that the book gave an account of the man which could not now be gained from those lips that were sealed by the cold clutch of death.

"Jingo! the very information I want," muttered Jack. "Perhaps I may find in these pages a description of the means to reach the mine from which those diamonds came."

Fritz had remained in the cabin when the sailors went out.

He saw the book and heard what Jack said.

"Pully for you, Shack!" he exclaimed, "I vos glat dot you find dot book alretty. Now when we go ashore mit dot electric locomotives der Thunder Gust, while ve make dot poundry between Siam and India, maybe ye could searches for dot diamond mine."

"That was just what was passing through my mind," said Jack.

At this juncture Tim came stumping in on a wooden leg.

He had resigned the wheel to the quartermaster upon hearing of the fugitive and now came to get more particulars.

Jack told him all he knew and showed him the book.

"Shiver my timbers, if that ain't good luck!" he remarked, as he took a copious chew of navy plug. "Let's hear wot the book says, Jack."

"Very well. I'll read it to you," replied the young inventor. "If we find out what we want to know, we can bring back a large fortune of those magnificent gems."

And so saying, he seated himself opposite his two friends at the table.

Opening the little memorandum book, he began to read its contents to his two eager and curious companions.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEAD MAN'S DIARY.

The notes in the book were divided in sections in the following order:

July 25.

Last night the Lone Star anchored in the Mekong off the city of Pnom Pneh, and a fugitive slave named Phaya Chakkri boarded the ship, after swimming from the shore. There were six men besides myself on watch. The slave declared that he ran away to escape being killed by his master for a breach of discipline. He said he lived in the town of Kiang Quang, and fled to the mountains of Poo Pungso. There he encountered a frightful Death Valley, in which there were great numbers of extraordinary diamonds, some of which he gave us to take him away from Siam. We agreed, if he would tell us where to find the valley. He did so. Two of our messmates, fearing he would tell others where the vast treasure lay, fell upon the poor wretch, killed him, and flung his body overboard. The secret, to make us fabulously rich, was ours alone now.

August 16.

It was agreed that we seven were to desert the ship, steal a boat and row up the river in quest of the diamond fields. This we have done, and, having reached the point at which

Phaya Chakkri said we must debark, we struck across the country and reached the mountains. The slave told us the truth. The valley lies below us. It is in the form of an enormous canyon, miles wide, leagues in length. To reach the bottom from here, vines were secured together, forming a long rope. My friends have tied one end to a jutting rock and are descending the mighty perpendicular walls that inclose the valley. I am to descend last.

August 20.

Heaven help me! the chafing of the vine on the rocks caused it to break, and I fell. The shock deprived me of sense—almost of life. My friends say I have been ill from it several days. My recovery was slow, but I was enabled to follow them to the river, in the sands of which there appeared a mine more famous than the Golconda. Dazzled and frantic, the great gems were eagerly sought, each man amassing a princely fortune in a day. The work goes on. We will be rich—fabulously—enormously rich.

Sept. 3.

Merciful God! Has retribution fallen on us for the murder of the slave? It would seem so. We soon learned the horrors lurking in this awful place. First the earthquake came that swallowed up the mate in the chasm that opened in the ground. Then the mephetic gases poisoned us. No sooner were we recovered when the frightful, blood-sucking plant enfolded the bo'sun and killed him. Terrible beasts and serpents attacked us. We gathered up our jewels and fled. Our food and water gave out. None were to be procured here. Starvation is our doom. No means of escape to the top of the lofty cliffs appeared. Vainly we have searched. And now death in all its hideous forms stares us in the face.

Sept. 15.

Nothing to eat or drink in twelve days. In the midst of our camp a new terror sprang up: Cupidity—avarice. My four companions, on the verge of the grave, determined to possess each other's hoard.

It came to open warfare. They shot at each other, and I fled for my life, leaving most of my gems behind. From the distance I saw three of those madmen fall. The survivor grasped their diamonds and adding them to his own, began to watch me, with a revolver in his hand.

I dare not return. I am famished—desperate. I must find food and water—escape from here. I cannot—must not—will not die. But little strength remains in my frame. I will use it to save my life.

October 2.

How I climbed up those cliffs by clinging to ledges, roots, saplings, I do not remember. Desperation spurred me on. There was water gushing from a nearby spring, and live fish that I devoured.

Perhaps that is what infused new life into me. I remember crossing the mountains and meeting a caravan going to the Isthmus of Kra.

They carried me with them for some of the jewels I had in my pocket, and, reaching their destination, tried to rob me of the rest. I fled to the shore and saw a sampan. My enemies are in league with the crews of two junks. If I can escape out to sea, I may be able to elude them.

Here the account abruptly ended. Nothing else was written in the book.

The rest, our friends already knew.

Jack laid the diary down upon the table.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked his companions.

"Py cracious, dot read like romances!" replied Fritz.

"Ay, but there's a truthful ring about it!" Tim declared, emphatically.

"Do you observe, though," said Jack, after a thoughtful pause, "that there is little or no account in the book of how we could find this wonderful diamond mine, even were we to look for it?"

Tim and Fritz's faces fell.

Jack had told the practical truth.

The utmost information they had gained upon the point was that the lost mine was somewhere near the Poo Pungso mountains.

As the range was over one hundred miles long and very likely contained scores of valleys, how were they to locate this one without a long, difficult search, fraught with much danger?

"Shiminey Christmas!" groaned Fritz, in disgusted tones. "I tought dot ve vould found oud all apoud vhere dot mines vos mit the book, und now ve don't vos learnt noddings alretty."

"I confess that I feel very much disappointed myself," said Jack; "but then, regrets won't do us any good. The evidence that such a mine exists is substantially proven by these magnificent diamonds in his possession. There is nothing strange about diamonds being found in Siam, for it adjoins India, where the first and most beautiful diamonds were ever discovered."

"D'yer reckon as we could find that 'ere mine if we wuz ter look fer it, my lad?" queried Tim, in earnest accents.

"Very likely, although it would be much like hunting for a needle in a haystack," replied Jack, nodding his head.

"Then wot's ther matter with makin' a effort ter do so when our course around the frontier brings us near them mountains?"

"I have no objections to making the trial."

"Dot saddles id, then," said Fritz. "Dot blan yust suid me."

And so it was arranged.

Tim and Fritz were delighted at the prospect.

"Sometimes," sagely said the old sailor, "things ain't near as they sometimes seem ter be. I know this from experience."

"Vot you know by oxperiences?" gruffly asked Fritz.

"I'll explain a leeule incident ter show yer. It happened ter me when I wuz in ther navy, aboard o' the ole frigate Wabash. Yer see, we wuz heavin' ther lead, a-takin' soundin's, one arternoon, when a bight o' ther line wound itself aroun' my timber leg, ar' pulled me ter ther bottom with it. Down I went inter forty fathoms o' water, an' ther fust thing I knowed——"

"Say, Tim," said Jack, interrupting him. "Don't you know that a sounding lead seldom weighs more than five or ten pounds? Now, how the deuce could such a light weight carry a big, clumsy fellow like you overboard, and down to the bed of the sea?"

"Why," replied the old sailor, flushing with guilt over being caught in one of the terrible lies he was in the habit of springing on any one who would listen to his yarns, "yer see it wuzn't ther weight o' the lead alone that did it, my lad. Thar was some tallow on the end o' the lead, an' it acted as bait fer a shark wot swallowed ther lead, his weight carryn' it down wi' me inter Davy Jones' locker."

"Holy chee!" gasped Fritz, opening wide his bulging eyes. "Vot a vivid imagnations dot olt son ohf a sea gooks vos got vunct. I tought he vould viggie ouhd ohf dot lie."

"Belay there, yer lubber," roared Tim, giving a hitch at

his pants, and glaring at the Dutchman ferociously with his deadly good eye. "As I wuz a-sayin', down I went——"

"Yah!" interposed Fritz, who could not bear to hear Tim's yarns, "yer said dot before."

"Shut up, will yer!" snapped the old sailor, losing his temper. "I'm spinnin' this yarn, not you, blame yer buttons! Ter perceed: When I reached bottom, ther fust thing I did wuz ter sit down an' consider how I wuz ter get out out o' my awkward sitiuation. Well, sir, in five minutes, I hed me mind made up wot ter do——"

"Why didn't you swim up? You would have floated up, anyway."

"I would adone that," said Tim, with another guilty start, for he had not thought of his means of ascension, "only I wuz so confused by my surrounding that I lost all power of my arms, an' couldn't swim——"

"Then how in thunder did you climb up?"

"Oh, Lor'!" gasped Tim, utterly dismayed now. "I meant to say as——"

But he got no further just then with his outrageous yarn, for Fritz dodged into the next cabin, and, picking up an old accordeon, he began to work a dismal tune out of it.

Tim had strong antipathy for this terrible mode of torture.

He couldn't stand the wheezing, groaning and puffing, and he uttered a war whoop and charged on the Dutchman.

Away scudded Fritz, upon seeing him coming, playing away as he receded, and he led the old sailor a long and tiresome chase down below.

Jack called in the sailmaker.

Pointing at the corpse of the man he had saved from the pirates, he said:

"Sew that body up in a piece of canvas with a weight at the heels. We will give the poor fellow a Christian burial."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the man, and, saluting, he withdrew.

Jack picked up the diamonds from the floor and went out on deck, when the first officer, who had been standing close to the door from the time the men had left the cabin, went inside.

He had heard all that had passed between Jack and his friends.

The man was named Silas Redburn.

He was a muscular fellow of gigantic stature with a short brown beard, brown hair, and small blue eyes shaded by a pair of thick, bushy eyebrows, while, by nature, he was somewhat reserved and overbearing.

He picked up the memorandum book from the table and put it in his pocket, eagerly glanced around in quest of the diamonds, and, seeing no sign of them, a scowl mantled his brow.

Casting a quick glance at the corpse, he wheeled about and abruptly strode out on deck again.

Jack had walked over to the bulwarks and stood gazing at the head of the gulf, toward which the yacht was speeding.

There was a lightship at the bar of the delta of the Menam river.

A channel ran through this bar, on each side of which a junk was sunk, and the yacht was heading for this channel.

"Mr. Wright?" exclaimed the officer, touching Jack's arm.

"Well, Mr. Redburn, what do you want?" queried the young captain, looking around.

"My share of the diamonds for helping save that man from the pirates," was the cool reply in low, deliberate tones.

"Don't you think you are presuming, to make such a demand?" asked Jack, sizing up his man from head to foot.

"No, it is fair. We are all entitled to a share."

"Say 'sir' when you address me, Redburn!" cried Jack in nettled tones.

"I'll say what I please if you intend to cheat us!" was the fiery reply.

"You insolent scoundrel! How dare you accuse me of dishonesty!" hotly cried the young inventor, his eyes fairly flashing with indignation.

"Don't you call me names! Give me my share of those jewels!" the mate hissed. "If you don't, look out for yourself."

"Ha! That's a threat—mutiny! I'll give you nothing, but——"

"Then I'll make you!" indiscreetly cried the malicious man, who by this time was recklessly blinded to the consequences of his actions.

He sprang at Jack like a wild beast, his brain in a whirl of excitement, and a grim resolve to get those diamonds at any hazard.

Bang! went Jack's fist in his face, like a pile-driver.

Down went the man, ripping out a furious malediction.

He rolled over and over upon the deck a moment, and then scrambled to his feet and made a rush for Jack with a long sheath knife in his hand, which he had pulled from his belt.

There was murder bristling in his actions and Jack saw it.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE LAND OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

"Hold, Silas Redburn, or you are a dead man!" cried Jack, sternly.

At the same moment he suddenly drew a pistol and aimed it at the crazed man, who was rushing toward him with the knife uplifted.

A frantic gasp escaped the officer.

For an instant he paused and hesitated.

Then his vengeful feeling overwhelmed him, for the blow Jack dealt him pained yet, maddening him beyond all measure.

"Curse you! I'll take your life if I swing for it!" he yelled in a violent paroxysm of fury.

Then he dashed at the young inventor again.

Seeing that he was determined to commit murder, Jack did not hesitate to pull the trigger.

To his dismay, the weapon failed to go off.

It then flashed across his mind that he had used all the shots from it in firing at the Malay pirates.

He had no more time to speculate.

Redburn reached him at a bound.

Down came the gleaming knife with a sibilant hiss.

A yell of horror escaped the crew, who now saw what was transpiring, and they ran toward the pair.

Jack darted back like lightning.

He acted none too soon, for the point of the knife penetrated his jacket and ripped it open.

The next moment, before his opponent could recover the use of his weapon, the young inventor struck him again.

Gigantic as Redburn was, his power of muscle was no greater than that of the athletic inventor.

He was felled like a log.

Jack sprang upon him and wrested the knife away.

A fierce struggle then began between them as they clutched and rolled all around the deck.

It had scarcely proceeded when the crew reached them and made an attempt to assist their young captain.

"Hold on, boys! I can manage him alone!" Jack said to them.

The men drew back obediently.

Ripping himself free of Redburn, the young inventor arose. Lifting the officer up in the air, and holding him at arms' length over his head, Jack rushed to the bulwarks with him. The Sea-Lady was at that moment going through the channel.

"I'll rid myself of you!" cried Jack.

Then he hurled the man out into the water.

Redburn struck with a splash and uttered a yell.

Then he sunk like a stone.

Passing on, the steam yacht left him astern.

Rushing aft and peering over the taffrail, the crew saw the officer rise to the surface and strike out for the lightship.

It was only a hundred yards away and he reached it and got aboard it with the assistance of the people aboard her.

"He's safe!" cried one of the men.

"Should have drowned!" added another.

"Why did he tackle you, Mr. Wright?"

"He wanted some of these diamonds," replied Jack. "Because I refused to give them to him, he let his greed get the best of his common sense, and he met with the fate you witnessed."

"Served him right, sir!"

"Ay, ay! Hurrah for Jack Wright, boys!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" cheered the rest, vociferously.

As soon as the excitement subsided, Jack apprised the men that the burial of the dead man was next in order.

The solemn rite was performed.

An oppressive, superstitious feeling left the crew when the body was disposed of.

Mess was then served.

The yacht reached the mouth of the river.

It was hardly to be discerned until they were squarely opposite it, in consequence of the dense foliage bordering the low-lying shore, above which arose hundreds of graceful cocoanut palms.

On the left hand stood a fort.

The Sea-Lady ran up the river to the town of Paknam.

The scenery along the river in the moonlight was peaceful and quiet, the long, glistening stream being studded with junks, and the shore line was broken by the outline of wahs or pagodas, sharply outlined against the sky.

Continuing on, the yacht reached Bangkok.

Here the scene was transformed.

Both sides of the river were densely populated, and the shores were lined with thatched roof floating houses, built on bamboo rafts.

White pelicans stood by the riverside and soared across the stream, the noise of the countless lizards and trumpeter-beetles aroused a hideous din, and millions of fireflies sparkled among the great fern jungles.

All kinds of peculiar boats were passing swiftly up and down the stream, the high towers of temples and broad roofs of palaces were bathed in the silvery moonlight, overhung by red flags with white elephants in the center, and above all rose the tinkling of the wind bells in the pagodas.

The yacht came to anchor among a number of stately merchantmen, a quarter boat was lowered and Jack was rowed ashore.

On the following day his business was settled with the authorities, and the cases containing his electric locomotive were hoisted from the Sea-Lady's hold, and then lightered ashore.

Command of the yacht had now devolved upon the second officer, who was promoted to take Redburn's place.

Assured that the boat was perfectly safe, then Jack, Tim and Fritz took leave of the crew, and carrying the monkey and parrot, went ashore to the inclosure on the outskirts of the

city on the left bank of the river, where the boxes and equipments had been carried.

Here they set to work at putting the Thunder-Gust together. It required a week's time to do this properly.

When she was in perfect working order, her appearance tallied exactly with the front page illustration of this book.

The locomotive was a most ingenious contrivance, worked by electricity, and made of the finest and toughest bullet proof aluminum, which combined strength and durability with the greatest lightness possible.

Her mechanism and running gear greatly resembled that of a locomotive.

The front was furnished with a pneumatic gun tube and a searchlight of 80,000 candle power, and the back with a curved ladder to reach the ground.

On the railed platform, the circular, woven wire wheel house was furnished with a compass, electric lever-board and various instruments.

In back were two rooms, on which stood a bell and a whistle operated by hydraulic pressure of air.

The middle room was combined as a sleeping and dining room, and the end room as a kitchen and storeroom for food and equipments.

All the electric motive force and lighting power was derived from a large number of electric accumulator jars set in a compartment under the floor, each cell giving a continuous current for a term of thirty days.

They gained their energy from a certain chemical compound that Jack had discovered, giving twenty volts for each cell.

The consequence of this wonderful invention was that a large number of ordinary one or two volt cells were not required, and a great weight was therefore done away with.

She was armed, provisioned and equipped for a long, rough journey, and was prepared to meet any ordinary emergency, as the broad, cogged wheels and flexible springs would run over the roughest ground.

The locomotive being very light for her great size, and the two front wheels working upon a king-pin pivot, by means of the worm-gear wheel, she was capable of being steered very easily.

On the afternoon when she was ready to start, the three friends boarded her, and passed into the pilot house.

Here Jack grasped the wheel and pulled the battery lever.

The electric current flashed into the motors that operated the driving wheels, and as they rotated, the engine ran ahead.

Out of the inclosure she glided, silent and swift, and reaching a country road that passed along a rice plantation, she started for the border, when a number of Siamese soldiers mounted on fleet horses came galloping after her from the city.

They were shouting and gesticulating to our friends to stop.

Jack glanced back at them in astonishment.

They were medium sized people with olive complexion, darker than Chinese, but fairer than Malays, with straight eyes, pointed foreheads, flat noses, thick lips, shaved heads, and the hairs of their beards pulled out.

They wore gorgeous costumes and carried modern arms.

In their lead was Nakhon, a chief.

"Hello! what's the matter here?" queried Jack in amazement.

"Py dunder! dey looks as if dey wanted to fight," said Fritz.

"Haul to," said Tim, "an' we'll see wot they're arter."

Jack cut out the current and applied the brake.

The Thunder Gust paused at once.

On came the soldiers until they reached the engine.

There were a dozen of them, and they surrounded the locomotive.

Jack had taken the precaution to pull the shutters of wire over the open window, and watching the Nakhon, saw him approach.

"Well, sir?" the inventor demanded in French.

"I have an order for your arrest!" panted the chief in the same tongue.

"Upon what charge?" asked Jack in surprise.

"Murder—or rather attempted murder!" was the startling reply.

"Who makes this charge?"

"One of your men named Silas Redburn."

"The officer whom I flung overboard?"

"Yes, that is the man."

"But he tried to kill me first."

"That you must prove to the first king's councillors."

"I decline to be delayed."

"Should you persist I must take you dead or alive."

"Proceed then, for I will not submit."

The officer retired to his men and Jack explained to his friends.

In a moment more every rifle among the Siamese soldiers was discharged at our friends, and clashing against woven wire netting failed to penetrate.

"Shiminey Christmas, where's my gun?" roared Fritz, excitedly.

"Hold on! Don't fire back at them!" cried Jack.

"Didn'd dey shooded at us?" indignantly cried Fritz.

"But failed to strike us," quietly said Jack.

"Ay, but they mightier!" Tim expostulated angrily.

"If we hurt them we will arouse the enmity of the kings."

"Vot ohf id?"

"Have you forgotten the yacht?"

"No; but vot dot's got ter do mit id?"

"They will seize her and outlaw us."

"Sure enough," assented Tim ruefully.

"Our most sensible course is to run away."

"But—" began Fritz resentfully.

"I know it looks as if we were afraid of them," hastily interposed Jack, "but we really ain't. It's only a stroke of policy."

Bang—bang—bang! came a second volley from the soldiers, interrupting all further conversation just then.

The bullets flew like hail against the locomotive, but like the first battery, failed to do any damage to her or her inmates.

Jack pulled the starting lever.

The electricity crackled and flashed among the machinery, and the locomotive rushed along the sunlit road.

A yell of anger escaped the soldiers.

Those in front of the Thunder Gust swiftly drove their steeds out of the way, for fear of getting run over.

Along flew the engine, and recovering from their alarm and consternation, the soldiers drove after her.

An exciting race began.

Further over on the rheostat Jack pulled the lever.

Additional electro motive force was put on, and under this impetus the locomotive went out like a cannon ball, and rapidly began to leave the yelling horde behind her.

The rocks on each side soon grew into cliffs, until they towered up fifty feet on each side of the narrow road, and the engine flew around a bend.

A cry of alarm escaped Jack, for coming up a steep descent of the road was a large cavalcade of men, elephants, and camels, in gaudy attire, and accompanied by flying banners and flaring music. The engine was rushing straight toward them.

CHAPTER IV.

RACING THE FLOOD.

The narrow road blockaded by the approaching procession, and the soldiers on horseback thundering along in pursuit rendered the situation of the electric machine highly dangerous.

It is customary among the Siamese to celebrate great festivals with pomp and splendor, and this procession was returning from the dedication of a suburban wat, or temple, headed by a great official called a Chao.

Bald-headed Buddhist priests in orange-colored scarfs, arrays of men in glistening suits and numberless women and children made up the party.

Some rode in howdahs on the elephants' backs with drivers sitting on the animal's necks, cross-legged, others were rocked by the awkward stride of camels, and the rest were afoot.

A panic was created the moment they saw the locomotive.

The people yelled and shrieked, the camels cried out wildly, and a tremendous trumpeting of the elephants ensued.

Everyone was thrown in confusion.

Hoping to clear the way, Jack pulled the whistle cord.

A long, shrill blast pealed out, accompanied by the ringing of the bell and crunching of the wheels and clanking of machinery.

The crowd scattered.

Right and left they fled, crouching close against the walls.

There was barely room enough for the Thunder-Gust to pass between them, but Jack did not hesitate to risk it.

Along shot the engine; up to the terrified people and animals she dashed and between their ranks she went.

Several of the beasts were struck by the wheels in passing and cried out, increasing the confusion.

But she passed them in safety, their ranks closed up, blocking the pursuit of the soldiers, and the locomotive went thundering down the hill furiously.

She reached the level ground below in the valley between the Menam and the Tacheen rivers, and sped away across an arid plain of sand with a stunted growth of resinous trees, bamboo, brushwood, and grass.

Along the streams were irrigated tracts producing rice, bananas, sugarcane and maize.

In a short time the soldiers were left so far behind that pursuit from them was perfectly hopeless.

Then Jack slackened the speed of the locomotive.

"Safe at last! They are leagues behind us now!" he exclaimed.

"Ay, an' now we kin reach ther border without no trouble, I hopes," said Tim, taking a chew of plug.

"Vos dot course ve must follow run along Burma?" queried Fritz.

"Lower Burma. We must strike in at Tavoy and run along the Pung Lung mountain range to the Shan states."

According to this plan the engine was turned westward, and reaching Suphon, crossed the river.

An angle southwest was made for Kanburi, where the fork of the river Maykaloung was crossed on a bamboo bridge the next day.

They were then at the foot of the mountains.

Fritz had taken charge of the cooking, and after breakfast he went up into the turret and said to Jack:

"Dit you found dot book yet?"

"No," replied the young inventor. "It's the strangest thing what could have become of it. I recollect laying it down on the table in my cabin on the yacht. When I went to look for it afterward it was gone."

"Some one must of hooked id alretty."

"Just what I think. Whoever took the book will know as much about the treasures of the Valley of Death as we do."

"Vell, dot makes up some gompitations."

"It may create great trouble for us, Fritz."

"Who you tink vos taken id?"

"Silas Redburn, if any one."

"I tink so, neider."

"He is a spiteful man."

"Yah—ve vos seen vun oxamples ohf dot alretty."

"I feel in my soul that we have not seen the last of him."

"Den you tink he vill go for dot Deat' Walley?"

"Certain of it if he stole the dead man's memorandum book, for he was the only one of the crew who showed any avarice about the diamonds."

Fritz agreed with Jack's views.

He relieved the young inventor of the wheel.

The locomotive was ascending an acclivity.

When she reached the top they observed a lake.

It lay embowered in a jungle and had one outlet.

This was a stream which was formed from numerous jets that spurted from crevices in a natural dam formed of logs, stone, mud, and branches on the opposite side of the hill.

The stream ran down a big gorge into the valley below.

As the locomotive reached the lake our friends heard the excited cries of some natives in this jungle.

They paid little attention to them.

The Thunder Gust ran down into the gorge.

She came to a pause below the fall that formed the stream, and our friends glanced up at the great wall of the dam.

It presented a scene worthy of being painted by an artist.

They had not been there but a moment, however, when they saw two Siamese men rush from the jungle upon the top of the dam and start to run across.

"Looker thar!" cried Tim, in surprise. "Wot's ther matter wi' them?"

"They are yelling as if afraid of something," replied Jack.

One of the men reached the side our friends were on.

The other slipped and fell in the middle of the dam.

For an instant it looked as if he was going to roll off and tumble down into the gorge, over one hundred feet below.

Luckily he stopped himself, however, and came to a pause, screaming and nursing one of his legs.

It was plain that he had sprained or broken the limb by falling, for he did not get up and follow his companion.

He lay and rolled as if in agony.

A moment afterward the cause of his and his companion's alarm became manifest.

A tremendous roar was heard.

Then an immense body flew from the jungle.

"A tiger!" exclaimed Jack, in amazement.

As the enormous body burst from the jungle it presented a magnificent yet terrible sight.

The beast was over fifteen feet in length, of a bright tawny yellow color, beautifully marked with dark transverse bands.

The royal beast paused for a moment among the jungle, and then gave a spring that carried it a distance of twenty feet.

A wild yell escaped the native as the monster landed near him, and despite his injury he hastily arose.

Before he could get out of its reach the beast dealt him a blow with its massive paw that knocked him senseless.

"Turn the locomotive around, Fritz!" cried Jack.

He hastily took up a huge cartridge-like projectile.

Opening the breech of the pneumatic gun he loaded it.

Fritz saw what he designed to do and obeyed.

Around spun the Thunder Gust, and in a moment more Jack was aiming the weapon at the tiger.

By this time the beast had crouched down to spring upon its victim and devour him.

The other native has disappeared.

Just as Jack discharged the gun the locomotive rolled backward in consequence of standing facing up a steep incline.

There came a thud from the gun as the air escaped.

It was followed by the whistling of the shot as it flew through the air.

But Jack's aim was spoiled by the movement of the locomotive.

Up toward the beast and its prey went the shot.

It did not reach its mark, however.

The shell struck the dam.

An explosion like thunder followed.

The dam was shattered.

As it began to go to pieces the impounded water began to pour out in vast volumes.

A cry of dismay escaped Tim.

"Turn ther locomotive, an run fer yer life!" he roared.

"By heavens, the whole dam is breaking up now," cried Jack.

"Und all because dot engine moved."

A frightful peril menaced them now.

Thousands of tons of water were preparing to gush from the lake down into the gorge through the breaking dam.

Once it reached the locomotive she would be buried in the flood.

Jack grasped the wheel.

He turned the engine around again.

There sounded a groaning and splitting noise in the dam.

Logs, rocks, and dirt were falling down the gorge in rapid succession, every removal being followed by an additional outpour of the water.

The idle splashing of the first cascade now was swelling into a river, as the volume of water increased, and the stream kept swelling until it overflowed its banks.

Away rushed the locomotive down the gorge.

No sooner had she started when a boom like a heavy battery of artillery was heard.

A huge section of the dam had given away.

It let out a stream that boiled white and frothy.

Ahead of the locomotive there was a steep hill, several miles in length, through which the gorge ran.

Descending this declivity added to her speed.

She ran ahead swiftly.

Then she tore on like a veritable whirlwind.

Up flew a cloud of dust behind her.

Over bushes, stones, ruts, and level places she rushed.

In back the stream had swelled up until the entire bed of the gorge was totally flooded to a depth of several feet.

A white wall of foam went rushing after the flying engine in a mad race to overtake it.

Jack's nerves were drawn to a high tension.

He glanced back at the pursuing flood in alarm.

It seemed to be leaping after them as if eager to engulf the engine in its deadly embrace and drown the trio.

Ahead the gorge seemed to be without end.

"We must reach the valley before the flood overtakes us!" he shouted to his friends. "If it reaches the engine in this canyon, we may perish like rats in a trap."

"Shlminey Christmas, vot a onlucky shot dot vos you fire by der tam!" groaned Fritz, dolefully.

"Ther flood's overhauilin' us fast," Tim commented, as he glanced at the hissing and boiling stream in pursuit. "It's dollars ter doughnuts as it will b'ar down on us an' wreck ther locomotive long afore we kin reach ther open wally."

The others shared his fears.

But they did not relax their efforts to escape.

A roaring crash was now heard, louder than the loudest peal of thunder, and it was followed by a shaking of the ground and an angry rumble that could have been heard for many miles.

"There goes the whole dam!" muttered Jack. "The weight and the force of that mass will push the flood along twice as fast now. Look back, boys!"

"My God! It is awful!" cried Tim.

The gorge was almost filled to the top with a stream gushing from the impounded lake now.

It came along with a speed that was terrific.

The locomotive was going like a race horse down the gorge, electric sparks flying from her machinery in showers, but the flood came twice as fast.

It was of no use trying to escape.

The end of the gorge was two miles away yet, and the roaring waters were but a few yards behind the engine.

In a moment more the flood leaped upon her, and she was buried in the terrible wave.

CHAPTER V.

ALMOST WRECKED.

The events that followed the engulfment of the electric locomotive were never accurately known to her inmates.

She was swallowed up by the waves.

Jack and his friends felt her lifted, swept along, rolled over and over, and then they began to choke and strangle.

"Leave the locomotive!" he shrieked just as the water reached her.

His friends heard his warning cry.

Jack stopped the machinery by pushing a lever.

Then he sprang to the door.

He saw his friends following.

The next moment he was out in the water.

He was carried along with the current some distance ere he at last managed to get to the surface.

Then a fierce battle for life began.

A floating tree trunk struck him on the back.

For an instant every nerve tingled and every muscle was paralyzed.

He quickly recovered himself.

Reaching out his arms, he touched the log.

Grasping it he was sustained.

Along he was borne by the swift current, at one moment submerged, and at the next floating on the surface.

Presently he felt himself being lunched forward.

He struck the ground.

It stunned him.

He lay unconscious a long time.

When he finally recovered he found himself lying in the valley.

An inch or two of water was trickling over the ground around his body, and the ground had a singular look from the flood that swept over it.

The gorge was some distance away.

Jack arose, feeling stiff and sore, and glanced around.

He saw nothing of his friends or the electric locomotive.

"Have they perished?" he muttered.

Then he started for the gorge.

The fierce flood had stopped.

He saw that it had carried him with the log out of the canyon to the plain of the valley, where the tide spread out.

Jack's head ached, and he found it difficult to walk at first.

As soon as he had gone a short distance he recovered the use of his limbs and passed into the gorge.

Here there had been a tremendous washout.

Rocks of enormous size had been dislodged from their beds in the ground, and were rolled miles from where they first laid.

Great banks and ridges of mud and sand laid heaped across the canyon, and bushes and trees were uprooted and swept entirely out of the flooded gorge.

The stream was greatly swollen yet.

He strode along its bank.

Suddenly he heard a voice overhead crying lustily:

"Jack ahoy! Jack ahoy!"

It was Tim's voice.

He glanced upward.

Then he caught sight of the old sailor.

He was perched on a ledge, fifty feet above, and could not get down.

"Hello, there, Tim! How did you get up there?"

"Washed here, my lad. Can't yer help me ter git down thar?"

"Yes, presently. Where's Fritz?"

"Ther Lord only knows."

"And the locomotive?"

"Blamed if I kin tell yer."

"Wait until I return."

Tim nodded, for he had to whether he wished to or not.

Jack continued on up the gorge.

Presently he caught sight of the Thunder Gust.

She was lying on her side in the middle of the stream, jammed up against a heap of rocks.

Running up to her, Jack was surprised to see Fritz lying on top of the locomotive peering inside.

"Hey!" shouted the young inventor.

The Dutchman bounded to his feet and glanced around.

"Shack, py shiminey!" he cried in delighted tones.

"What are you doing there, Fritz?"

"Lookin' ter see vedder Whitskers and Bismarck vos alife."

"Well, what's the result?"

"Der boat' ohf dem vos roostin' abofe der water."

"How in the world did you save your life?"

"I didn't safe it."

"Who did then?"

"God."

"Well, how was it done?"

"Dot I don't know. I find meinselluf lying oop here."

"Then you lost your senses?"

"No, dot vosn'd it. Dey vos knocked oud ohf me."

Jack laughed, and examined the locomotive as best he could.

What little he could see of it seemed to be intact.

He did not have much hope for the rest of it, however.

"Can you get me a long rope?" he asked.

"Fer sure," replied Fritz. "Vot you do mit id?"

"I want to help Tim off of a ledge."

"Vosn't he det?"

"No—very much alive."

"Vot a tough olt rooster he must be?"

And so saying, Fritz opened the side door and disappeared inside the mess-room; and a splashing of water followed.

In a few moments he reappeared, completely drenched.

But he had the rope Jack wanted, and taking it, the young inventor returned to Tim.

"Catch the line!" he cried.

"Let it come," answered Tim cheerfully.

Jack hurled the coil up to the old fellow.

Tim caught the line dexterously, and making a loop in one end, he secured it to a projecting rock.

Dropping the rest of the line over the edge of the ledge down into the canyon he slid down and joined Jack.

"By thunder, I'm glad ter git off o' that perch!" he cried, delightedly, as he shook hands with Jack. "Whar did ye git ther line?"

"From the Thunder Gust."

"Ah, then yer found her?"

"Ye, and Fritz as well, entirely uninjured."

Jack swung the line loose of the rock above, and when the noose dropped down he coiled it up again.

"Whar's ther Dutchman?" asked Tim.

"On the engine in the stream."

"Is ther locomotive wrecked?"

"I don't know. We must use this line to pull her out of the water."

They then returned to the Thunder Gust.

Having exchanged salutations Tim and Fritz began operations.

The sailor hove one end of the line to the Dutchman, and as soon as it was made fast to the locomotive Fritz swam ashore and helped the others.

Pulling on the line, the three managed finally to hoist the engine upon her wheels in the stream.

Then Fritz returned aboard.

Transferring the rope to the cow-catcher, he joined Tim and Jack once more, and they pulled the engine ashore.

Both Bismarck and Whiskers were drenched but alive, and raised a discordant chorus as soon as they were on land again.

An examination of the locomotive showed a sad state of affairs.

Glasses were broken, rods were bent, the metal work was bruised and dented, the machinery was thrown out of order, the battery chemicals were spoiled, and, in short, there was at least twenty-four hours hard work ahead of them to put the machine in fit order to run again.

Fortunately, everything perishable on the machine was in water-tight lockers, and thus escaped utter ruin.

Jack and his companions set to work.

It was late on the following afternoon before the engine was thoroughly repaired, new lights of glass set in, and fresh solutions put in the storage batteries.

But the work was so well done that it would have been impossible to have known by the appearance of the engine that any serious accident had befallen her.

"The flood must have passed very rapidly," said Jack, as he and Tim and Fritz went aboard at the completion of the work.

"Vhy you tink dot?" queried Fritz curiously.

"Simply because the monkey and parrot were not drowned. The locomotive must have been under water during the passage of the current. Had it lasted long how could they have lived?"

"Werry true," assented Tim. "An' d'yer know wot?"

"Vot?" demanded Fritz.

"It reminds me o' a lettle incident wot once happened ter me. Yer see I wuz in the navy aboard o' ther ole frigate Wabash at the time."

"Mein Gott! vos dot a yarns?" groaned Fritz dismally.

"A true occurrence," asserted Tim, solemnly.

"If you dell dot lie I blay me a tune by mein accordeons," growled Fritz, who could not stand the whoppers Tim got off.

"If yer do ther Lord help yer," grimly answered the old sailor, who hated Fritz's music more than the Dutchman did his lies.

"We'll see!" threatened Tim, with a glitter in his good eye. "As I was about to obsarve, we wuz sailin' along ther middle o' ther Pacific Ocean, when up came a tidal wave. All o' my messmates wuz skeered ter death. They wuz sure we wuz as good as dead men. But wot did I do ter save 'em?"

As Tim asked this he looked triumphantly at his friends.

"I give it up!" laughed Jack.

Fritz answered with the drenched accordeon.

He opened the valve, pulled it apart, and squeezed the two ends together, intending to play.

Instead of that, the accordeon exploded with a loud report. It had been weakened by the drenching it got.

A cry of disgust ripped from Fritz, and Tim roared out laughing.

"Donner vetter! It's busted!" cried the Dutchman.

"Oh, Lor', wot a joke!" yelled Tim, laughing immoderately. "Why don't yer go on a-playin' now, yer Dutch lubber? Ho, ho, ho!"

Fritz rushed out of the room to escape further jibing.

"Sarved him right," chuckled Tim. "Waal, as I wuz a-sayin, along came that 'ere tidal wave. I rushed up forrard, hove the anchor, an' when it struck ther frigate, she stood up agin' it as stiff as a post——"

"In mid Pacific?" asked Jack.

"Ay, ay, my lad."

"How long was your anchor cable?"

"A hundred fathoms."

"That's only 600 feet. Soundings in mid Pacific show, according to Dr. Young, that the average depth is 2,149 fathoms, or two and a half miles! Now, how did you reach bottom with a 100 fathom line?"

"Why—why——" stammered Tim, in great confusion. "I—we—that is——"

But he became so utterly confused that he got no further.

"Better go and help Fritz get things to rights inside," said Jack, taking pity on him. "I'll drive the locomotive ahead."

"Ay, ay!" eagerly assented Tim, glad to get out of the ridiculous position into which he had placed himself.

And out he stumped.

Jack pulled the battery lever, and the engine ran down the gorge until she reached the valley and continued on her course.

The boundary line was followed all night and all the next day.

Late in the afternoon the engine reached a level plain and started to cross it, when there came a shout of alarm from Tim.

The old sailor was up on the roof of the mess-room.

"What's the matter, Tim?" anxiously shouted the young inventor.

"Good Lor'! Look back thar, my lad! Look back thar quick!"

Wondering what had happened to alarm Tim so, Jack peered through one of the rear bull's eyes.

The scene that met his view startled him exceedingly.

CHAPTER VI.

BURSTING A MONSOON STORM.

At certain periods the northeast monsoon winds change to the southwest.

The time depends of course on the sun, and varying with the latitude, are called the breaking up of the monsoons.

It is accompanied by variable winds, intervals of calm, furious tempests, and the wildest hurricanes.

Tim had seen one of these storms gathering.

He knew from experience what terrible things they were.

"Run fer yer life, Jack!" he roared, as he hastened downstairs. "If that 'ere scorcher overtakes us, thar won't be enough o' this 'ere machine left ter use fer toothpicks!"

"Take the wheel," said Jack. "There's a settlement ahead there on the brow of that hill beside the woods. Go fer it."

As the old sailor complied Jack went outside.

There he observed a large herd of buffalo come rushing out from the woods they had left behind.

The brutes were terrified by the lowering sky, and came racing along after the engine like some vast dark cloud sweeping with a billowy motion across the plain.

A dull rumble arose from the pounding of their cloven

hoofs; they carried their noses close to the ground, and moving in a compact mass, they came sweeping along after the engine.

The sky had assumed a most singular appearance in the west. Along the horizon there gleamed a fiery white belt, over which hung the blackest of clouds.

Not a breath of air stirred around the locomotive.

Birds were going by in flocks overhead, at a tremendous rate of speed, their frightened cries plainly reaching Jack's ears.

In the midst of the black banks that were gliding up over the ethereal blue vault there rode a solitary cloud of light color.

It was large of size and peculiar in outline.

The form was like an inverted funnel.

It was moving swiftly in advance of the storm, the point of the cone hanging down until it touched the ground.

Jack frowned when he saw the dangerous object.

It rose and fell with a stately motion, and seemed to be rapidly whirling at the base.

Every object it touched vanished like magic.

By examining it closely with a powerful glass Jack saw that the cloud was filled with flying objects, looking like trees, rocks, and similar things.

Tim headed the locomotive toward the distant settlement.

As he did so Jack noticed that the cloud changed its course and swept along after the flying buffaloes.

It soon overtook the animals.

Then it swept through the midst of the herd.

An opening was made among them fifty feet wide.

Every creature that was in the way of the cloud vanished from the face of the earth, and was carried up in the air.

The rest ran off to the right and left.

A small cluster of mangroves ahead of the cloud obstructed its way, but the moment they were reached they too disappeared.

Nothing seemed able to resist that awful devastator.

It carried everything before it like chaff.

The locomotive was now exerting all the strength of her batteries, the electricity flying from her machinery in fiery arrows and snapping globes.

Still she could not outrun that cloud.

It looked to Jack as if the cloud had fallen into a draught made by the rapid transit of the engine in her wild career over the plains, so persistently did it pursue her.

A cloud of fine sand rose up all around the Thunder Gust from her broad wheels digging into the ground.

Jack saw that the fatal cloud must soon reach her unless a method of evading it could be promptly devised.

Sharp flashes of lightning now began to fly out of its edges in fiery darts, and a faint roaring and humming noise arose, which gradually grew in volume the nearer the cyclone approached to the electric locomotive.

Jack passed into the wheel-house.

"Can't she make any faster time, Tim?" he asked, anxiously.

"No," replied the old sailor. "Every volt's on."

"Change her course then."

"It won't do no good, my lad."

Tim spun the wheel around, and the locomotive swerved off to the right when Jack glanced back.

The cloud seemed to follow the direction of the engine.

"It's of no use!" he remarked in dismay.

"Jist wot I reckoned," said Tim, gravely.

"Keep on for the village again."

"Ay, but we won't never reach it!"

"I've got a plan."

"Wot yer goin' ter do?"

"Burst the cloud."

"How?"

"With a shell."

Tim's curiosity was aroused.

He saw Jack go back in the store-room.

Here the young inventor took a reel of fine strong wire.

Fastening it to a bomb-shell, he opened the rear door, and gently let the shell down to the ground.

As the locomotive rushed along, the line paid out from the reel which was secured to the floor.

Fritz stood by interestedly watching Jack's actions.

The bomb remained immovable upon the ground as long as the wire ran out.

As this wire was very long the locomotive gained a great distance from it before the line was all used.

The dangerous cloud was then very close behind the locomotive, and Jack waited until it drew near the bomb.

No sooner was it hovering over the explosive when the young inventor stopped the line running out.

As soon as this was done the rushing locomotive began to drag the explosive over the ground.

It encountered a stone presently.

Then it burst with an awful report.

A mass of dirt and stone was blown up into the cloud.

Jack then observed that the pendant of the cloud was shattered into fragments, and the shock drove the bulk of it high in the sky.

Its rotary movement ceased partially, and then it began to disgorge the carcasses, timber, water, stones, and other matter which it had scooped up and held in suspension.

Down came a shower of these missiles, littering the ground over a large area.

As the cloud bounded up it lunged forward.

Passing over the flying carriage at a high altitude at a fearful velocity, it cleared the village ere descending again.

"I've done it!" cried Jack delightedly.

"Donner und blitzen!" roared Fritz. "Who efer heard ohf bustin' up a tornado? Shack, you vos a drump!"

"If you can destroy the danger of a water-spout on the sea by the ball and concussion of a gun, I reasoned that a tornado cloud could be broken the same way. Reel the wire in."

While Fritz was so engaged, Jack went up forward to Tim.

The old sailor cast an admiring glance from his solitary good eye upon the young inventor and remarked:

"I heerd wot yer said."

"Then you know the danger is past."

"Whar did ye git that idee, Jack?"

"From that old-fashioned fellow called Common Sense."

"Can't say that I've ever met ther lubber," said Tim, gravely shaking his head, for he did not quite catch the drift of Jack's remark.

"But I must say as I once had a leetle experience in ther navy somewhat like this one. Yer see, it happened——"

"Hold on, Tim," interrupted Jack. "No time for yarns now. See there—we are close to the village, and here come a number of the natives out to meet us."

He pointed ahead of the locomotive.

The Siamese had been expecting death from that cloud.

But as soon as they had seen that our friends had done something to dissipate the danger, all the idolatrous superstition in their natures was aroused.

They looked upon the locomotive and its occupants as something wonderful and supernatural.

Buddhism is corrupted by a general worship of nats or phoos (spirits or demons) and temples or shrines are erected to worship them.

Superstition in the remote districts of Siam practically constitutes the only religion the natives have.

Albinos, such as white elephants, crows, animals or beings

are by the majority regarded as the new form taken by their dead ancestors and families.

Indeed, in some districts of Siam white men never have been seen.

As the locomotive rushed toward them they followed the custom of their country never to remain erect in the presence of superior beings.

They flung themselves upon their knees before the engine, clasped their hands together, raised them level with their foreheads, and bent over until their heads touched the ground.

Jack stopped the locomotive in front of them.

He could not speak their language, but addressed a few words in several other languages to their Amphion, or head man.

None of them answered him.

It had begun to thunder and lightning overhead.

Torrents of rain fell upon the natives, but they did not heed it, but remained bowed and groveling upon the ground in an attitude of the most abject submission.

Finally it occurred to Jack that they might understand Chinese, and as he understood a smattering of that tongue, he cried:

"Arise! return home!"

It was evident that they understood him.

But instead of daring to rise in the presence of what they all imagined to be beings of a superior order, they writhed and crept away on their knees and stomachs, all the while keeping their faces toward the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SACRED WHITE MONKEY.

The men in front of the engine were gentle and amiable people, shrewd and lively, and fonder of amusement than work.

They wore loose jackets with sleeves reaching the hips, and buttoned up to the throat. There was a sarong or native woven cloth three yards long and one wide passed around the waist and brought between the legs.

All the children were naked, but wore anklets, amulets, necklaces, and bracelets.

The women dressed like the men, save that instead of a jacket, scarfs were worn across the shoulders. All were hatless, bare-legged, and bare-footed.

Both sexes shaved their heads, leaving a small tuft on top.

They crept and crawled toward the village, which was soon reached, the Thunder Gust bringing up the rear, under Jack's guidance.

All of these houses were of one story, raised a few feet above ground.

They were built exclusively of split bamboo, covered with a thatch of attap, or dried palm leaves.

Each was surrounded by a neat fence made of tree branches.

Jack turned the blinding rays of the searchlight upon the village and saw that its most imposing buildings were its wats or temples.

One of these pagodas was covered with bells, having fan-shaped tongues which the slightest wind moved, causing a continual musical tinkle.

The building was furnished with long dim corridors, crowded with rows of solemn idols, carved and gilded.

There were open courts, paved with large slabs of marble, and filled with graceful spires, shafts and columns.

The white walls had gilded eaves and cornices, arches were lined with gold, there were sacred doors of ebony, pearly

gates of iridescent beauty, grotesque stone statues, and queer paintings of the Buddhist inferno.

Numerous bonzes or priests were at their devotions in the temple, before a clumsy, colossal image, lying on the floor, covered thick with gilding.

There had once been a wall around this village, but now it was overturned, covered with thick and impenetrable masses of weeds, brushwood, and tall trees, while its nooks were tenanted by bats and vultures.

From somewhere there came the sound of flutes, drums, guitars and an instrument composed of flat pieces of sonorous wood beaten with a hammer, making up a weird, melodious band that mingled with the tinkle of the bells.

The head man and the crowd, heedless of the pelting rain, led the way to the door of the temple where the priests were commanding the cloud that threatened the place to depart.

A mandarin and his train of attendants were in the temple and as Jack alighted and passed in the head man explained to him what our friends had done.

He at once approached and bowed to the ground.

Jack was disgusted with their grovelling subservience.

He noticed that no matter how slight the difference of social caste was between these Siamese, an inferior always bowed, crawled and humbled himself in the dirt before his superior.

These actions did not accord with freedom and liberty inculcated in the minds and lives of our independent Yankee boys.

The mandarin spoke French fluently.

Jack was glad of this, for now he could converse with the man.

Although the Siamese have no schools, there are very few who cannot read and write, as they are taught when young by their parents.

This mandarin seemed to be a kindly person.

"I am told that you have saved our village, sir?" he said.

"You honor me. I destroyed the storm-cloud to save my own life," Jack replied.

"By doing one thing you accomplished another."

"For which I am very glad, indeed."

"Will you allow me to present you with our white elephant?"

"I want no pay," politely answered Jack, hardly able to restrain a smile, for he did not know what he should do with such a creature.

"At least accept our hospitality for a month?"

"Nor can I do that," replied Jack. "I am employed by the United States Government to go over the boundaries of your country and must not tarry here long. I will be glad, however, to dine with you to-night, with my friends."

The mandarin was delighted with this.

He led Jack to his palace, the locomotive following, and she was there left in the courtyard, and our friends entered the house with their host.

He entertained them with the greatest courtesy, and took pleasure in showing them the white elephant referred to.

The beast was fastened in a room in the palace with a chain of gold. Its food was of the daintiest kind, served up to it on plates of embossed precious metal, and it had a retinue of keepers who absolutely worshiped it.

The animal was held in the highest veneration, the cause of which was that he was supposed to be the incarnation of some future Buddha, and would therefore bring blessings on the country that possessed it.

It was not exactly white, the hue of its skin being more of a pinkish flesh color.

His food consisted of fresh grass, sugar-cane, and plantains, and the beast enjoyed the rank of nobility.

Besides this creature there was a corral, made by planting

huge tree trunks in the ground a foot apart, which held a number of ordinary tame elephants for traveling purposes, as these beasts can go where no horse or wagon can penetrate in the jungle.

A supper was served consisting of edible birds' nests and a variety of curried meats, daurien, a foul-odored but delicious fruit, mangosteen, and other things native to the place.

A dish of betel nuts were then passed around, but our friends wisely excused themselves from taking any, although the general use of them is a matter of etiquette.

They are a narcotic stimulant that swell the lips and blacken the teeth (which among the Siamese is considered a mark of beauty), and finally cause the teeth to fall out.

They cause a giddiness in persons unaccustomed to chewing them, the mouth is excoriated, and for a time the sense of taste is deadened.

While the supper was in progress, everyone squatting on mats upon the floor to eat, several Nautch girls came in, and to the rhythm of the strange music our friends had already heard they began a graceful dance.

Jack and his companions greatly enjoyed the entertainment they received, and finally retired.

On the following morning they brought the mandarin aboard the electric coach, and made an effort to explain how it worked.

He could not understand the electricity, however.

They gave him a ride in the Thunder Gust, and finally took their departure from the village.

Everyone watched the locomotive depart.

She excited the most intense interest of the natives.

It was a clear, pleasant morning, and the machine ran down the hill; the freshness of the air from the storm of the previous night dissipated the intense heat that had been prevailing.

The Thunder Gust followed the boundary line for a week.

She had run into the great mountain region in the Siamese Shan States, and finally began to work her way along the northern border toward the eastward.

Jack, in the meantime, had taken some careful surveys.

His work was highly satisfactory when he finished with the Burmese border, and finally reached the Mekong river again at Kiang-Tsen.

There his geographical work ended.

Crossing the river on a bamboo bridge, that threatened every moment to give away beneath the weight of the locomotive, they followed a well-beaten road toward a dense forest through which it ran.

Tim and Fritz were in the wheel-house with Jack.

"We have ended our official work now," said the young inventor to his companions, as he steered the engine along, "and now are at liberty to return to Bangkok if we choose."

"Ay, but how about ther lost mine o' Death Valley?" asked Tim.

"Vos dose Bung-Poo mountains far away?" queried Fritz.

"The Poo-Pungso range?"

"Yah, dot vos der name—der Boo-Bungso."

"From here they are 225 miles to the eastward."

"Ain't yer goin' thar?"

"What's the use?"

"We might find that 'ere valley."

"Shall we try to do so?"

"Ay, ay. I don't wanter to go back ter ther yacht Sea Lady yet."

"Besides dot, ve vos haf more fun here," said Fritz.

Jack succumbed to their wishes.

He had no hope of finding the famous valley, though.

"Very well," he remarked. "We will risk it, boys."

A short time afterward the locomotive ran into the wood.

and they had not gone far when they observed a talapoin, or sort of preaching fakir, in the road ahead of them.

These priests will not condescend to salute either of the two kings who rule over the country, yet he had prostrated himself upon the ground, bowing humbly to a white monkey in a tree.

He venerated the beast much the same as the white elephant is worshiped, but the swarms of other monkeys in the trees were chattering furiously, picking green cocoanuts and pelting the priest with them.

Despite the terrible bombardment, the talapoin kept his ground, and allowed the mischievous little rascals to whack him all over without offering to resent it.

"Poor beggar—see what he is standing to worship that little white monkey," laughed Jack.

Just then the monkeys began to rain the cocoanuts down at the locomotive, and one of them struck Tim on the nose.

"Gee whiz! Belay thar, ye pirates!" he roared, clapping his hand to his bugle. "By gum, I'll fix yer fer that!"

And so saying, he picked up a pistol and fired several shots among the troop, dropping half a dozen, and scattering the rest.

The white monkey was among the slain.

As soon as the priest saw it shot he uttered a prolonged howl of woe, sprang to his feet, shook his fist at our friends, and muttering a dire threat, rushed away.

"We'd better get out of this," cried Jack. "He will return with a crowd, and murder us for killing that sacred animal."

And with a look of alarm, Jack started the locomotive off at full speed, and rushed away.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIGHTING WITH ELEPHANTS.

The shadows of twilight had fallen upon the woods, and as the locomotive ran along the narrow road, Tim took a chew of plug and said:

"This place reminds me o' the infernal regions."

"I always tort you vos a tuyfel," laughed Fritz.

"Ever seen the infernal regions, Tim?" asked Jack.

"Ay, ay, that I have," asserted the old sailor.

"You did? When?"

"One time when I wuz in ther navy."

"Get oudt!" skeptically replied Fritz.

"Oh, yer needn't b'lieve it if yer don't wanter."

"How could we doubt you?" asked Jack, winking at Fritz.

"D'yer want me ter prove wot I say?"

"You tink ve pelieve you ohf yer don't?"

"Werry good then. Listen: Yer see, ther ole frigate Wabash wuz a-sailin' along ther equator, when all at onct we see a island an' sailed into a leetle bay. Hardly wuz we inside of it when—fizz—boom—pop!"

"Vot der doost dot mean?" growled Fritz.

"It begun ter rain fire balls as big as pumpkins. Ther water turned inter boillin' steam, an' streaks o' fire shot out o' ther ground. We wuz all so startled we didn't know wot ter do. There wuz a big openin' in ther cliff ahead, an' in we sailed ter get out o' ther heat. No sooner wuz we in, when up out o' ther water flew a big black lubber with a spiked tail, horns on his head, an' a pitchfork in his hand. He wuz folloed by a band of imps, ther lower half of whose bodies wuz jist like those of horses——"

"Hold on! Hold on!" gasped Jack.

"Along they came, an' boardin' us, they tackled us wi' thar pitchforks. We fit 'em like mad with our cutlasses an' boardin' spikes," continued Tim, regardless of the interrup-

tion. "It wuz a terrible fight, 'cause fire shot out o' thar noses, eyes, mouths, and ears, an' every time it touched us it burned like a red-hot poker. Waal, sir, they wuz settin' fire ter ther frigate an' killin' our crew by ther thousan's, when——"

"Shiminey Christmas, vill yer stop?" roared Fritz.

"I'm mos' done," calmly replied Tim. "All at once I woke up——"

"You awoke?" asked Jack.

"Ay, ay! It wuz all a dream," said Tim, with a grin. "I laid in my hammock an' dreamed it, because a lot o' matches I had in my hip pocket had caught fire an' wuz burnin' me dretful."

"Donnervetter!" growled Fritz in disgust.

A prolonged roar of laughter pealed from Tim's lips.

"Fooled ye that time, my hearties!" he chuckled. "Yer thought as yer'd trip me up an' fin fault wi' my yarn, but I wuz dead onter yer."

At that moment Jack heard a loud crashing in the bushes ahead of the locomotive, and glanced out of the window.

It was instantly followed by a loud trumpeting of elephants.

These gigantic beasts are protected by the government.

It is a crime to injure them.

A moment after Jack heard the noise he saw several of the big brutes emerge from the woods and pause in the road.

They had heard the approach of the engine and now had their little evil eyes fastened intently upon it.

"Elephants!" exclaimed Jack.

"Sherusalem! Dey plock der vay!"

"An' here cooms more o' them astern of us!"

Tim pointed back.

A dozen of the huge beasts appeared there.

Jack brought the engine to a pause.

"It won't do to charge on them," he remarked.

"Sposen they charges on us?" replied Tim.

"Ve been retty for dem!" growled Fritz, seizing a gun.

For several moments the elephants stood in a solemn phalanx watching the electric locomotive.

The elephants in front began to slowly approach, their long trunks swaying to and fro, their enormous ears raised, and their ugly glances fastened on the Thunder Gust.

"An attack!" exclaimed Jack. "These wild beasts are terrible when aroused. Arm yourself, Tim!"

"Ay, ay," replied the old sailor complying.

Jack busied himself with the machinery for a few moments, switching several wires from one binding post to another.

By the time he had finished the big bull that led the van reached the locomotive, and seized the front wheel with its trunk.

For a moment it lifted the forward section of the machine up.

The next instant Jack turned a lever that threw a current of electricity into the wheel.

A terrible yell escaped the brute.

It dropped the wheel and retreated, swinging its trunk furiously, colling it up to its massive tusks, and trembling like an aspen.

"Don't fire at them! I've burned him, and he may communicate to the rest of the herd what happened," said Jack.

Unfortunately for this peaceful view of the matter, the big elephant's tactics were the reverse of what Jack expected.

It retreated a distance of ten yards.

Then it turned and charged on the Thunder Gust.

It was followed by all its companions.

In a moment there were a dozen of the colossal monsters trumpeting and swinging their long trunks around the engine.

"Fire!" screamed Jack.

He pulled out his own pistol and discharged it.

Tim and Fritz followed his example instantly.

Three of the elephants were hit.

Several of them had struck the locomotive the most violent blows with their tusks and trunks, making it rock as if about to topple over.

As soon as the reports of the exploding shells pealed out, they stampeded, recoiling from the Thunder Gust.

"Fritz! Bring some grenades—quick!" shouted Jack.

Away hastened the fat fellow into the store-room, and in a few moments he returned with a dozen bombs.

Dividing them among his companions, they began to hurl the destructive missiles at the beasts.

Report after report rang out.

Every time a bomb burst against the tough hide of the monsters they tore out huge chunks of flesh.

The noise and excitement among the herd increased.

Back and forth they rushed, maddened with pain and rage.

Fast and furious rained the bombs, wounding, maiming and killing the brutes, and several of them fell.

The road ahead became blocked with their huge carcasses.

Those that escaped into the dense woods on either side rushed away, trampling down the shrubs and bushes with a loud noise.

The ones who had been in back of the locomotive hastened away frightened by the exploding of the grenades.

"Hurrar!" yelled Fritz excitedly. "Ve peat 'em!"

"But we can't run ahead on account of the fallen bodies."

"Don't yer can go troo der voods after dem?"

"No—there isn't space wide enough among the trees to pass the engine."

"Hark!" cried Tim, holding up his finger.

"What do you hear?" queried Jack.

"Voices of men, my lad."

"Shiminey, und here day come!"

Jack glanced back.

There was a large crowd of natives coming at a run.

They were led on by the priest whom they had seen worshipping the white monkey they had shot.

He had gone to the town, told of the crime against their religion which Jack and his companions had committed, and brought out a crowd to punish the trio.

Every one of the Siamese, expecting warfare, had been very careful to arm themselves.

Upon seeing our friends slaughtering the elephants the rage of the natives was increased tenfold.

A wild cry of exasperation escaped them.

Then they charged upon the locomotive in a body, intent upon tearing it to pieces.

Jack saw at once what an evil humor they were in, and cried:

"Look out, boys, they mean mischief."

"Down with ther lubbers!" roared Tim.

"Wait? They can't do us any harm! Don't fire."

As Jack spoke he closed the windows.

He had not acted any too promptly, for the natives now opened upon the locomotive with rifles and pistols.

Reports pealed out on all sides, bullets crashed against the machine without piercing it, and then the natives made a rush, and got upon the locomotive.

They swarmed all over her.

A frightful din of yells arose.

Showers of blows were rained upon the Thunder Gust.

Jack moved one of the levers upon the switchboard.

It threw a current of electricity into the frame and shell of the engine.

All the natives were barefooted, and no sooner was the current going when they felt it in their feet.

The screams that arose were frightful.

Those who could do so sprang to the ground and rushed

away, but most of them, caught and held by the current, were unable to.

They were stuck to the engine, and as the waves of electricity flashed into their systems, they were surprised, agonized and frightened, and made the air resound with their cries.

In the midst of the tumult Jack happened to glance back, when a thrill of alarm passed over him.

He saw reinforcements coming in the form of half a dozen trained elephants, with howdahs on their backs filled with armed men.

Secured to the back of the foremost beast was a mountain howitzer, which a native had loaded and was aiming at the engine.

"By thunder, we are in for it now!" muttered Jack.

Hardly had the thought crossed his mind when the man on the elephant's back discharged the gun.

There came a blinding flash, a deafening report, and a ball went flying toward the locomotive.

CHAPTER IX.

A COMBAT WITH SLAVE RAIDERS.

Jack had been turning the Thunder Gust around while the gunner was aiming the howitzer at him.

He succeeded in doing this, and sent the locomotive flying toward the armed elephant just as the shot was discharged.

The actions of the locomotive were so rapid that she absolutely drove herself out of the way of the shot.

The ball flew over her.

On she plunged, straight at the elephant.

At the same moment Jack turned on the search-light.

Its intense rays blinded the elephant and its riders.

They were also greatly frightened.

Around they wheeled in an effort to escape the way they came, and the locomotive dashed after them like a streak of lightning.

As soon as the electric current was turned into the wheel-motor, it left the body of the engine, and the howling natives were released of its hold and sprang to the ground.

Off they leaped on each side, and the moment they were free they sped into the woods where they rapidly vanished.

In a moment the engine reached the elephant.

There came a tremendous shock as its powerful cow-catcher struck the animal's legs.

At the same moment Jack pulled the whistle cord and the unearthly shriek it emitted added to the terror of the beasts.

The whole herd was thrown into confusion.

Their drivers yelled at them, the men in the howdahs and the ones on the ground shot at the Thunder-Gust and in a few moments a scene of disorder was raging.

Jack stopped the engine.

As soon as the retreating elephants were some distance in advance again he started the machine and she plunged against the monster's legs a second time.

The shock almost hurled the elephant to the ground.

Away rushed all the terrified animals and the woods were left behind.

This was all Jack desired.

"We are safe enough now!" he cried.

"Goin' ter make a detour, ain't yer?" queried Tim.

"That's the only way we can go ahead."

"Dose son-ohf-a-sea-gooks von't bodder us some more," said Fritz.

"We have frightened them worse than whipped them."

Tim took the wheel, and leaving their late antagonists by

ing in all directions, they started the Thunder Gust off on a detour of the woods.

She sped along swiftly and soon left the locality behind.

Her course ran parallel with the Mekong river, over a sandy plain, and, as the moon arose, they left the woods behind them.

The soft, mellow light flooded down upon the broad sea of sand to the left, while on the right-hand side, the most luxuriant foliage bordered the course of the great river.

A caravan of porters were passed.

They came from Yun-nan in southwest China.

The sight of the engine filled them with such superstitious dread that they dropped their packages of silk, tea and opium, and fled into the jungle by the river, where they hid until the Thunder Gust had passed.

Several miles further on a small village of Kha (meaning man) was seen—a simple, aboriginal race of rice cultivators.

These and the Moi, Lolo, and other tribes are preyed upon by the more civilized people of the south.

At the moment the locomotive appeared in sight, a slave raid was being made upon the place by a band of men from Tin Keo.

The people captured in these raids are sold in slavery to dealers from Sambodia and Siam proper.

People were fleeing in all directions from the ruthless devastators of their quiet, peaceful homes.

Fathers fought for wives and families with the courage of despair, mothers had their little children remorselessly torn from them, and all who resisted the onslaught were wounded or killed by the slave-hunters.

As soon as Jack saw what was going on, his first sensations were those of intense horror.

When this feeling passed away, a frown of anger darkened his brow, and, pointing ahead at the miserable dealers in human flesh, he cried:

"By heavens, boys, there's a game I can't stand!"

"Wot is it, a fight?" innocently asked Tim.

"A fight for liberty. They are land slavers."

"Himmel!" gasped Fritz. "Hookin' dose peoples?"

"Exactly. Don't you see the ones they've captured and shackled?"

"Say, blow me if I'm ergoin' ter see 'em do that an' remain passive!"

"Get your guns ready to tackle those fiends."

"Dot's vhat's de matter!" roared Fritz, aching for a fight.

And as Jack charged the engine upon the scene of the strife, both Tim and Fritz hastily armed themselves.

Along rushed the engine under all the strength of her batteries.

Jack kept her as much in the shadow as possible at first, but as soon as it drew close to the village he turned on the searchlight and sent her flying out in the clearing.

Not only the slave-hunters were startled by the light of the engine with its blazing light, but the people who were attacked were equally surprised.

Hostilities ceased at once.

It was easy to distinguish the raiders from the villagers as they wore palm leaf hats and carried weapons, while the Khas wore no clothing whatever.

"Fire at the slavers!" roared Jack. "Drive them away."

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

Four shots burst among the rascals.

As soon as the marauders began to fall, it was very easy for both parties to understand who was attacked.

It filled the slavers with fear.

They fled for their lives toward the river, firing back at the locomotive as they went.

"After 'em Jack!" roared the old sailor. "They're a-headin'

fer ther jungle along ther river. If they gits in among them ere bushes an' trees, we won't never find 'em agin."

"Und looker dot! Dey vos got some of dem babies mit 'em!" gasped Fritz. "Dey vos bound to steal dem anyway!"

"They won't capture a soul if I can prevent it!" the young inventor cried determinedly.

He sent the locomotive flying straight for the jungle.

A short distance ahead a small tributary of the river cut off the retreat of the slavers.

As the engine prevented them from going westward along the bank of the river, they had no alternative but to plunge into the stream and swim across.

This is probably the plan they were driven to adopt, for they dropped the children they had been carrying away and diving into the water, struck out for the opposite shore.

They were astute enough to know that the locomotive could not follow them, and gave utterance to a defiant yell when they saw it come to a pause upon the embankment.

Every one of them were magnificent swimmers, as most of the Siamese are, from living almost entirely along the banks of the rivers, and once they reached midstream, an exhibition of their aquatic prowess was beautifully shown.

They had retained possession of their arms and, floating like ducks, they fired back volley after volley of cartridge shots at the Thunder Gust.

Dozens of bullets struck the engine.

She stoutly resisted them, however.

But the defiance of the slavers proved to be short lived.

They were suddenly horrified to see the waters all about them part, and the huge bodies of a number of crocodiles came up all around them.

The rest made a superhuman effort to escape to shore.

Off they swam furiously.

More of the crocodiles rose to intercept them.

Limbs were torn off, bodies bitten in two, and the unfortunates were killed one after another, as the most rapid and adroit swimmer was unable to escape the saurians.

Jack and his companions did not remain to watch the fearful doom that had overtaken the slave-traders.

The sight was too horrible.

"Alight and gather up those poor children!" he cried.

Tim and Fritz did so.

There were a score of the little objects.

It was easy to locate them by their pitiful wailing.

Within a short time they were all gathered up, put aboard of the locomotive, and Jack drove the machine back to the village.

Here there were many adults wounded and killed.

The children were restored to their half frantic mothers, and our friends were overwhelmed with blessings.

In order to escape it, they hastily rode away on the locomotive and continued on their course.

In three days they reached the Poo-Pungso mountains, and, heading for a pass that lead to the eastward side, Jack said:

"The place we are in search of lies on the other side of this range, boys. If we find the Death Valley, our fortunes are made."

His words filled Fritz and Tim with delight.

They did not know until that moment that they had reached the mountains that the memorandum book said contained the wonderful valley.

An eager, burning feeling to find the place filled their minds, and the old sailor cried, smilingly:

"If we don't find that 'ere diamond mine, me lad, it won't be 'cause we didn't look fer it."

CHAPTER X.

THE WILD PIGS.

Toward the close of the third day after the foregoing events occurred, our friends had brought the locomotive to a pause in the mountains and were seated at the supper table.

In the midst of the meal, they heard an ear-splitting yell emanate from the pilot house, instantly followed by a cry of:

"Cheese it, fellers, here they come."

"What's that?" cried Jack, looking up in surprise.

"Bismarck—der barrot," laughed Fritz.

"Wot a human voice that critter's got," growled Tim.

"Murder!" yelled the bird just then. "Holy smoke! here they come!"

Jack's suspicions were aroused.

There was something peculiar about the parrot's cry.

He arose from the table.

"Oh, it ain't nuthin' but his squawkin'!" growled Tim.

"Well, it won't hurt to look," said Jack, as he went out.

"Wow!" yelled the parrot. "Where's my gun? Cracker! Cracker!"

Jack strode into the wheel house.

The parrot was perched on the compass binnacle.

Whiskers was hopping up and down in the middle of the floor, chattering and squeaking incessantly.

For a moment Jack was inclined to think that the little monkey's actions had aroused the parrot's alarm.

But this idea was dissipated when he glanced out the window.

Some distance away he observed an enormous drove of wild pigs careening down the mountain side.

The noise of their feet going over the ground was like the rushing of waters over a rapids.

As they drew nearer, he could hear a hoarse chorus of grunts and squeaks breaking the silence.

Along they swept, down the mountain, and the rising and falling of their bodies looked like the heaving of the sea as there were hundreds of the little creatures in the herd of different sizes and colors.

"So that's what alarmed you, eh?" laughed Jack. "It don't frighten me any, though, old fellow, for our stock of fresh meat is nearly exhausted, and I'm going to get some of that pork."

Fritz came in just then and saw the pigs.

"You vos going to get some of dem?" he asked, eagerly.

"Send the locomotive after them, and I will pick off a couple."

The Dutchman started the engine.

As soon as she went rattling down the mountain, Jack procured a repeating rifle and went outside.

Here he observed that the pigs were far in advance.

They had become cognizant of the fact that the locomotive was in hot pursuit of them and they ran very rapidly.

The Thunder Gust dared not go at full speed.

The ground was very rough and rocky, and the machine jolted and rocked so that it was difficult to stand upright in it.

In a few minutes the pigs reached a plateau, and as they rushed across it toward the rocks on the opposite side, the locomotive ran faster.

She soon arrived in firing range.

Then Jack opened fire upon the animals.

Down went several of the squealing pigs, and the rest reached the other side of the plateau.

Here they rapidly disappeared.

Jack was surprised.

"What has become of them?" he muttered.

"Didn't yer seen?" asked Fritz, who had overheard him.

"No. Did they go over an embankment?"

"Do yer see that openin' in der rocks?"

"Yes—now I do."

"Dot's vhere dey vvented."

"Follow them."

"I will ohf der machine go troo."

"I am curious to see where that opening leads to."

"Must be a bick place to hold so many picks."

On rolled the Thunder Gust to the opening in the rocks.

Upon a nearer approach, they observed that the rocky defile was amply large enough to admit the locomotive.

She ran into it and they found it dark and gloomy.

Her searchlight was turned on.

Ahead they could hear the patter of the flying pigs' feet and the grunting, squealing and snorting of the animals.

The locomotive was going rapidly.

Her pace was accelerated by the downward trend of the bed of the defile, and it now became rocky.

Suddenly a tremendous racket from the pigs reached the ears of the young inventor.

He saw them vanishing again.

They disappeared rapidly, one after another, much as if the earth had swallowed them up.

In a few moments the reason became apparent.

The defile entered in a sheer descent.

"Stop the locomotive!" shouted Jack, in sudden alarm.

"Who's der medder?" shouted Fritz, cutting off the current.

"There's a gulf ahead."

"Mein Gott!"

Fritz grasped the brake.

In his excitement he gave it a violent push.

It was unfortunate he did so, for there sounded a sharp snap, and the handle broke off close to the floor.

"Thunder!" cried Jack.

"I can't stop her now!" groaned Fritz.

The engine had on such rapid momentum that she went plunging ahead.

"Hang on for your lives!"

The next moment the Thunder Gust reached the edge of the declivity and shot off.

Through the air she plunged, and down she went to the bottom, like a cannon ball.

There came a terrible crash.

She had struck the bottom.

Jack and the Dutchman were knocked spinning.

Fritz lay senseless and the young inventor was half stunned.

In a few moments Tim came stumping in with a scared look on his face and found Jack getting up.

"Jerusalem!" he roared. "Wot's happened?"

"We've fallen from up there!" replied Jack.

He pointed up at the end of the defile.

It was a distance of twenty feet above the engine.

The wonder was that the machine had not been broken to fragments despite her great strength.

He soon saw what saved her.

Hundreds of the wild pigs littered the ground around her, their yielding bodies having broken the force of the fall.

These creatures had killed and maimed themselves in coming down, but had been the means of saving the locomotive from utter destruction.

She stood upon her wheels.

"Tim, revive Fritz," said the young inventor.

"Ay, ay!" replied the sailor, saluting.

"I will try the engine."

"Wot's ther matter with ther brake?"

"It broke just when we most needed it."

"Gosh blame it! That's allers the way!"

While Tim was busy reviving Fritz, Jack pulled the battery lever, and to his intense astonishment, he found that the machine worked as well as ever.

Not a thing had been broken.

She rolled over the carcasses of the pigs and soon reached solid ground.

The first shadows of twilight had fallen, and a dull gloom surrounded the engine.

She was, Jack saw, below the plateau.

He let her run along some distance before he tried to stop her.

Tim, in the meantime, had revived the Dutchman.

All were justly astonished over the miraculous salvation of the machine, and could speak of nothing else.

Having brought the Thunder Gust to a pause, Jack went out and carefully examined her.

Not even a pane of glass was broken.

The twilight rapidly deepened into a dense gloom that gave promise of a storm before daylight.

"We had better remain where we are for the night," said Jack to his friends. "We can't see the nature of this ground ahead in the gloom, and we might get into more trouble if we were to keep on."

"Ay, ay," assented Tim. "Jist my idea."

"Where der doost vos ve, anyhow?" blankly asked Fritz.

"It's hard to say. But judging by the run those pigs gave us, we ought to be pretty well on down toward the foot of the mountain we are on."

"I tink so, neider."

"Let's git some o' them pigs aboard?" suggested Tim.

This was accordingly done.

The larder was more than supplied then.

Assured that everything was in order, our friends played a game of cards until ten o'clock.

The impending storm then broke.

It rained furiously.

Thunder boomed and lightning flashed incessantly overhead throughout the night.

But our friends were well sheltered from the fierce storm, and, dividing the watch, they, in turn, turned in.

It was late on the following morning when Tim and Fritz were awakened by hearing Jack shouting excitedly to them, and they hastily arose to see what the matter was. There was a stupendous surprise in store for them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MONARCH OF THE MARSH.

Rushing into the pilot house, the sailor and the Dutchman looked around for Jack, but they failed to see him there.

In the meantime his shouts continued.

"Hey, Tim! Hey, Fritz!"

"Ahoy there! Whar are ye?"

"Out here! Come on—come on!"

"Vot's der troubles?" roared Fritz.

They both rushed to the window and peered out.

Jack was outside, approaching the Thunder Gust.

He held something aloft in his hand.

The Dutchman and sailor alighted and ran toward him.

"We are in the Death Valley!" cried Jack.

His companions were thunderstruck.

They stopped and stood gazing at him in speechless amazement.

Fritz was the first to recover.

"Der Deat' Walley?" he gasped.

"Yes, and here is the proof!" laughed Jack.

He showed them the object he had been holding aloft.

It was an enormous rough diamond.

Tim and the fat fellow gazed at it intently.

Jack had told the truth.

As soon as they could realize it, Tim demanded:

"Whar did yer get that thing?"

"In yonder stream!" Jack replied.

He pointed to a creek some distance away.

The old sailor took the stone in his hand to examine it.

Then he uttered a cheer, and a grin overspread his face.

"By jingo, it is a big diamond!" he cried.

"Donner und blitzen! I don't understandt me dis!" muttered Fritz.

"Oh, it's an easy puzzle to solve," laughed the young inventor, delightedly. "We have, by the merest accident, found the lost mine of Death Valley. That's the way the case stands!"

"So dis vhas dot place, eh?"

"Follow me over to the stream and you'll see!"

Tim and Fritz complied with alacrity.

The sun had risen in a cloudless sky.

Looking around, they saw an endless chain of steep cliffs as far as the eye could reach, hemming in the basin they occupied.

Mountain peaks towered all around the place.

The most luxuriant vegetation teemed on all sides of the valley, deer, elk and buffalo grazed the fine pastures, hot springs were seen boiling up in a cloud of steam, far off to the southward the trees were filled with birds, and a broad stream, gushing from a large, dark, cavernous opening in the rocks, trickled across the plain.

On every side the scenery was grand and imposing.

Jack led his companions to the stream.

It was clear and limpid, deep in some places and shallow in others.

A swift current babbled over the sandy and stony bottom.

Pointing down in the water, Jack said:

"See there!"

The sunlight fell upon various colored stones imbedded in the sand.

Flashing and sparkling like fireflies, they showed at once what they were.

Diamonds, emeralds, topazes and sapphires!

The wealth they represented was tremendous.

Jack made no reference to the other stones.

They paled into insignificance before the big diamonds.

He let his friends see for themselves.

"Thar's no doubt of it," muttered Tim.

"You see the story of the castaway was true!" muttered Jack.

"How strange der vhay ve find dis place!" gasped Fritz.

"And it's a question how we'll get out again," said the young inventor, ruefully. "You must remember what the book said about those men being imprisoned here."

"Don't let us talk about that yet!" muttered Tim. "I'm feelin' too good to borry trouble now, my lad!"

"Coom on! Get at 'em!" suggested Fritz eagerly.

He possessed all the acquisitive nature of his race.

Jack detained him.

"Don't be so greedy!" he exclaimed.

"But vot's der use wastin' time?" growled Fritz.

"The stones can't run away."

"No," agreed Tim. "Don't be a hog."

"Vell, I tink der sight of dem stones make me vant dem."

"You are getting in the same avaracious mood the castaway's friends were."

"Vot's ter be did ther fust thing, Jack?" queried Tim.

"Explore this valley."

"Well—an' then?"

"Divert the stream from its course."

"Ah, I see. Yer wants ter get at the stones easier."

"Yes. By leaving the bed of the stream dry, we can work at gathering them in with no trouble," replied the young inventor, nodding.

"Good enough!"

"Fritz, cook breakfast."

They returned and boarded the locomotive.

Here the Dutchman prepared the morning meal.

At its conclusion, our friends started the engine off.

She followed the course of the stream slowly, and the animals, browsing the sweet herbage, bounded off in affright before her approach, as they were not accustomed to being disturbed by man.

At the distance of a league from their starting place, the grass grew high and thick.

Fritz had assumed charge of the wheel.

He kept the Thunder Gust straight ahead.

But he soon had occasion to regret it.

A dull swashing and sucking noise under the wheels was heard, and peering down sharply, he observed that the engine was passing over a swampy piece of ground.

Swarms of mosquitoes arose so thickly around the vehicle that the air absolutely took on a dark aspect.

They settled all over our friends, ravenously biting and tormenting them fearfully.

Jack had a remedy against them, however.

Fritz stopped the locomotive to apply the liquid to his skin.

Once the three were covered with it, the mosquitoes left them alone.

"I vas run her into a quagmire," said the Dutchman.

"What—is this a marsh?" asked Jack, in surprise.

"To been sure. Der vheels stick like glue."

Fritz started the machinery again.

It was hard to move the locomotive now.

By pausing, her wheels had sunk into the mud.

The motors forced her ahead, however, with a sucking and sloshing sound at the wheels.

Her movements became spasmodic.

In soft places she went slowly, but upon reaching a hard stretch, she would plunge ahead with sudden jerks very quickly.

"Shouldt I turn out?" asked Fritz.

"No! Keep straight ahead now."

"Dis vos vorser as bulling teeth."

"Can't be helped now."

At this moment the engine reached a hard stretch.

She suddenly and swiftly dashed over the mire.

In a moment more there came a collision.

Her cowcatcher had hit the body of an enormous rhinoceros. The big beast was wallowing in a pool of mud.

Although leaden bullets and lion's teeth cannot pierce the thick layers of skin that cover these ungainly beasts, the gnats and mosquitoes manage to torment them horribly.

In order to coat themselves with an armor of mud, they wallow in these pools and thus prevent the insects troubling them.

A strange bellow escaped from the beast.

It was very easily irritated.

In this state, they show much capriciousness of temper.

Fritz stopped the locomotive as soon as he saw the animal.

Indeed, had the Thunder Gust went any further, she would have went into the big puddle.

"Holy chee! Looker dot cow!" gasped the Dutchman.

The beast was as big and strong as an elephant, for it was

one of the Indian species—the largest and most formidable known.

Its horn was about three feet in length.

It fastened a scowling glance of its small, twinkling eyes upon the locomotive, much as if it were sizing up the machine.

The beast's temper was aroused by the blow it received.

In another moment it lowered its singular looking head, and puffing and blowing, it charged on the engine.

Although usually slow in their movements, these beasts can upon occasion, run rapidly.

Crash—bang! came its head against the Thunder Gust.

The creature's horn caught in the spokes of the cowcatcher.

It had miscalculated the sort of object that it had attacked.

Instead of damaging the machine, its horn, which grew from the skin and not the skull, was torn off.

A dreadful cry of pain escaped the beast.

It recoiled into the marshy jungle and, crushing down the bushes and every obstacle that rose before it, vanished.

Fritz reversed the lever.

The locomotive backed away.

In a few moments he changed her course.

Turning her at an angle, he let her run.

She now reached solid ground.

Before she could speed away, however, the rhinoceros came flying from the marsh again with awful rapidity.

It bore down on the locomotive like an avalanche.

"Look out!" gasped Jack. "It's furious!"

"Ve can't got away," cried Fritz with alarm.

On came the beast, head downward.

With that wild rush, it reached the Thunder Gust.

The shock knocked the machine spinning in one direction, and toppled her over with a bang.

So great was the blow that the animal crushed its own skull and fell dead.

CHAPTER XII.

ENEMIES BY THE MILLION.

Jack and his companions were knocked spinning when the locomotive toppled over with them.

The wheels were whirling around like lightning and while the under ones gouged up the dirt and sent it flying in all directions, the top ones gave rise to a loud, buzzing sound.

Falling on the down side of the rooms amid the breaking glass and loose articles, the trio received sundry heavy bumps and bruises, barked their shins and pounded their heads.

Jack rapidly recovered from the shock.

"Tim!" he shouted, scrambling upon his feet.

"Ay, ay!" feebly responded the old sailor. "Alive and kick-in' yet!"

"Fritz!" proceeded the young inventor.

"I vos a det Dutchman!" groaned the man.

"Not quite, if you can roar like that!"

"Shiminey Christmas! Vot hit us—a eart'gwake?"

"Get out of here as quiek as you can."

"Vait bis I sthob der macheneries."

"I'll attend to that. Good Lord, what a capsize!"

Jack broke the circuit and the wheels stopped revolving. Then, he clambered out after his friends.

He saw that the cowcatcher was shattered.

The rhinoceros lay dead with a broken head two yards away.

Both Tim and Fritz had long faces.

They were rubbing their injuries and glaring at the overturned locomotive in anything but a pleasant frame of mind.

"I reckon that lubber's head wuz harder nor the cowcatcher," growled Tim. "Ther proof o' it is that while ther cowcatcher is all busted ter pieces, ther animal's is only squashed in."

"He must have dealt the machine a furious welt," said Jack. "By thunder, it was like the stroke of a thunder bolt."

"How ve got der locomotives up again!" asked Fritz, ruefully.

"Ropes and blocks. We'll get a purchase on the body of the rhinoceros," replied Jack. "Get the tackles ready."

Tim got the lines.

Well versed in the use of such implements, as they were, in a very short space of time they raised the engine upon her wheels again.

This done, they found that nothing but the cowcatcher was broken, and as there were no means of repairing it, they had to take off the demolished pieces and throw them away.

Boarding her, the journey was resumed.

Taking great care to give the margin of the stream a wide berth, they finally reached a spot opposite a number of tall ant mounds, when the bleached skeleton of a man met their view.

He lay in the midst of the ant hills.

These were no such ant hills as one sees every day.

The size and solidity of these houses have always excited the amazement of travelers who have seen them.

Inside, the chambers are so large that a dozen men can find shelter inside of one of them; indeed, they are frequently used by hunters to hide in while waiting for wild animals.

The ravages these termites create are frightful.

Not a particle of flesh had been left on the skeleton of the dead man, nor was there a vestige of clothing.

Jack alighted and, walking over to where the body laid, he knelt down beside it and scanned the ground.

There were a number of brass buttons, a tobacco box, a revolver, knife, and a few articles of metal lying on the ground. Among them was a large heap of diamonds.

"This is the man who killed his companions for their share of the gems," muttered the young inventor.

Everything was now going to prove the truth of the statement in the memorandum book.

Jack gathered up the magnificent gems, filled his pockets, and, having secured them all, he looked around for the other men.

A short distance away laid another skeleton among some vines.

It very likely was the remains of the murdered man.

Striding toward it, Jack had scarcely taken ten paces among the gigantic ant hills, when all at once the ground caved in under his feet and he felt himself falling.

A cry of alarm escaped him.

Down he plunged, a distance of ten feet, surrounded and followed by a shower of dirt from the earth's crust.

He landed in a heap in a cavern.

It was swarming with millions of warrior ants.

In a moment he was covered with them.

They crawled over him.

They got in his eyes, nose, ears, mouth, between his clothing and skin, in his shoes—in fact, there was scarcely a spot they failed to reach.

"Help! help!" he screamed.

Then he tried frantically to get rid of the pests.

They tormented him to the verge of madness.

No sooner did he brush some off when others took their

He ran around, rolled on the floor, and strove to get out, but saw no means, save by the way he had fallen in.

It was clear that the termites had undermined the ground in the formation of this subterranean dwelling.

The insects bit him furiously.

In a few moments he was bleeding all over from hundreds of wounds and they began to voraciously devour his clothing.

Hundreds of holes were quickly bored through the garments and they hung on his shoulders in rags.

To show to what extent and with what speed these ants carry on their destructive work, it need only be stated that in some localities they have descended upon a house while the family was absent, bored all the foundations and the furniture, leaving only the shell, so that when the owners returned, their property was destroyed, their furniture went to pieces, and the house fell in ruins.

Fritz heard Jack's wild cries.

He rushed to the orifice and saw what was transpiring.

"Dim, bring a rope, quick, for God's sake!" he yelled.

The old sailor swiftly obeyed.

He realized by the tones of the Dutchman's voice that something serious had happened.

As soon as he reached Fritz, he saw what it was.

Down went the rope and Jack seized it and was hauled up.

A cry of horror escaped his friends upon seeing what a terrible sight he presented, and they began a furious onslaught upon the ants that still adhered to the young inventor.

In so doing, they became covered themselves.

"To the water!" gasped Jack.

It was the only way to radically get rid of them.

Away rushed the three for the stream.

They plunged in and the effect was felt immediately.

The termites released them.

Within a remarkably short space of time, they got relief, and their courage at once revived.

Returning to the locomotive, Jack exclaimed:

"The castaway truly said that this was a valley of death."

"Vot new horror ve meet next?" groaned Fritz.

"Heaven only knows! This place seems cursed."

"Wot yer got in yer pocket, my lad?"

"Diamonds, Tim. That corpse had them."

"Then it must o' been the feller wot lived longest——"

"Yes. See over there—more skeletons!"

"Let's see—three on 'em."

"Dot vas fife, so far."

"The castaway makes six, and the fellow who fell into the crevice of the earthquake makes the seventh."

"Ain't one o' them skeletons a-lyin' in a bush over thar?"

"Yes, and the ants have eaten every one of them."

Our friends went into the locomotive, attended to their injuries and changed their wet clothing for dry apparel.

The following day dawned before our friends finally recovered from the effects of the ordeal, but they continued their journey.

Passing several hot, boiling springs, they finally reached the end of the valley and there found that the water of the stream ran down into a huge hole in the ground with a thunderous roar.

The engine was brought to a pause, and as the heat was intense, our friends turned in to take a nap, each taking turns on watch.

It was during Tim's watch that the old fellow observed a shady tree growing near the edge of the stream.

It seemed to offer such a pleasant spot for a siesta, that the old sailor left the engine and started over to it with his pipe ready for use.

Three sides of the tree were surrounded by swampy ground. The remaining side was dry and elevated and strewn with animals' bones.

Upon it there grew a vine composed entirely of interlacing stems of dark color, looking somewhat like the branches of a willow denuded of foliage.

It seemed to offer a good place to seat himself, and down upon it went the old sailor, lighting his pipe for a quiet smoke.

No sooner, however, was Tim seated, when, to his intense astonishment, the twigs began to twist and twine upward in a horrible, life-like manner.

They broke out with a thick, viscid gum, exuded from the pores.

The entire network of fine, rope-like tissue of fibers sinuously wound themselves all around the astonished sailor with remarkable rapidity.

The gum was a dark grey, remarkably adhesive, and of a disagreeable odor, very powerful and nauseating to inhale.

A terrible power of suction was in that vine, arising from a number of infinitesimal suckers, ordinarily closed, but opened now for the reception of food.

No sooner had they fastened upon Tim's skin when he let out a fearful yell as their clinging clasp blistered and puckered his skin, while the blood was sucked from his pores by the plant.

He struggled with all his might to get away, but the tough fibers of the sinuous vine held him as if in a vise, while the sickening odor began to deprive him of his senses.

It was the dreadful plant called the *sagenas de diable*!

CHAPTER XIII.

GATHERING A HARVEST OF GEMS.

Enfolded in the meshes of this awful, murderous plant, the poor sailor was as helpless as an infant.

He now recalled to mind that this vine resembled the one in the folds of which one of the sailors of the *Lone Star* had perished.

The diary of the castaway had mentioned it.

It was very evident, too, by the number of animals' bones lying upon the ground, that this plant lived entirely upon live flesh.

Provided by nature with the dreadful power it possessed, it laid cunningly like a mass of dead roots, waiting for its victims to tread upon its branches when they were inevitably trapped.

Nor would it release its prey until the vampish nature was satisfied by drawing all the blood out of its victim's body.

Tim did not know what it was theoretically.

But he now had a practical experience of its power, and that sort of a teacher is the best in every way.

A burning sensation assailed him.

He felt as if at every spot where the vine touched and reddened his skin, that red hot irons were pressed against his flesh.

Yell after yell pealed in frantic accents from his lips, and he continued his efforts to struggle.

In this he failed.

The vine kept tightening around him.

He was pressed closer and closer within its embrace.

Soon he was rendered utterly helpless as to movement.

But he kept on screaming for help at the top of his voice.

So great was the clamor that Jack and Fritz were awakened,

They emerged from the sleeping room by the side door, and glanced around with startled looks to see why Tim raised the clamor.

Nothing of the old fellow was seen at first, as the vines had rolled up in a compact ball around him.

"Hello! Where are you?" shouted Jack.

"Here under the tree, in the vine!" roared the sailor.

Jack peered at the *sagenas* sharply and soon distinguished the form of his agonized old friend.

It instantly flashed across his mind what had occurred, and he rushed toward Tim, shouting to Fritz:

"Bring me an axe!"

Reaching the old sailor, Jack found him entirely enveloped.

He had a knife and he seized the vine with one hand to cut it away, when the suckers caught his fingers.

Hastily pulling his hand away, he got a sample of what the old sailor was enduring, and he left pieces of the skin behind.

Jack gashed at the deadly vine frantically.

It was so tough that it did not cut easily.

Fortunately, at this moment, Fritz rushed up with an axe, and set to work at breaking the vine at its root.

He soon lopped off the branches.

They at once relaxed their hold upon Tim.

But the old sailor, weak and exhausted, had succumbed to the deadly fumes of the plant and had fainted.

Losing no time, they carried him to the locomotive.

Here restoratives were applied.

He finally regained his senses.

It was several days after ere he entirely recovered from the effects of it.

In the meantime, Jack and Fritz made an exploration.

They found that the entire valley was enclosed by towering and perpendicular walls, with scarcely a break in them.

It was merely a freak of nature, no stranger than the Palisades on the Hudson, and similar formations.

The entire bed of the stream was not filled with the gems our friends had seen, as they only occurred in the place where the first ones had been found.

Still, there doubtless were many washed down the stream by the strong current that kept the water in movement.

"We must return to the place where we first found the gems," said Jack, one morning. "We can do nothing here."

"How you vas got at dem?" asked the Dutchman.

"By blasting out a side current to diverge the waters as I first proposed. We will then have but comparatively little trouble."

According to this plan they started the engine back the way they came.

On the following morning, they reached the spot.

Here they alighted with some tools.

A course for the canal was mapped out in the form of the letter C, so that the stream would enter the canal and run back into the original bed a hundred yards below where it left.

Then the ground was bored.

Horrorite bombs, joined by electric wires, were planted in the holes.

An electric current was then flashed into the shells.

A terrific explosion ensued.

Up into the air an enormous mass of dirt was blown from a depth below that of the stream.

Into it gushed the water.

It was necessary to form a new breakwater across the stream to complete the operations, and this was done.

Nearly all the water was thus turned into the new channel, and a large tract of the stream thus left dry.

On the following morning, the work of gathering the gems began.

Several days thus passed by.

A large number of precious stones were amassed.

By the end of the week, enough of the gems were found to satisfy the most grasping mind, and our friends desisted in their labor.

"We have got enough," remarked Jack that night.

"Shiminey Christmas, dere's a million dollars' worth of dem!" chuckled Fritz, gazing at the glittering box in which they lay.

"More'n that!" said Tim in positive tones.

"You are right," Jack assented. "According to their weight and the lowest market value, there are a million dollars worth here as they stand. But you must understand that in cutting them, they will lose about fifty per cent."

"Well, dot's halluf a million—more as \$166,666.66 apiece."

"The question now arises how are we to get the engine out of here."

Fritz and Tim looked glum.

They had forgotten all about this very necessary object.

They glanced at each other in silence.

"You have not given it a thought, I see," remarked Jack, in silence.

"Nein. I didn't vos tink ohf dot," admitted Fritz.

"Neither did I," exclaimed Tim, in disgust.

"Well, can you solve the problem?"

They both began to ponder.

It was useless, however, for Tim said:

"Climb up thar wall an' hoist ther locomotive up with popes."

"Leaf her down here und let us valk home to Bangkok," said Fritz.

"You have neither hit upon a feasible plan."

"Vell, vot you tink?"

"I've got a plan."

"Oud mit it."

"Build a bridge."

"Vot for?"

"Up to the defile from which we fell."

The countenances of both the sailor and the Dutchman cleared.

Jack had solved the problem.

The distance was about twenty feet to the opening, and there were plenty of trees long enough and strong enough to make a trestle that would bear the weight of the locomotive.

It would be necessary to make a gradual slope, as the engine could not very well mount a steep incline.

They laid out their plans accordingly.

A number of trees were felled the next day and the Thunder Gust dragged them over to the base of the declivity.

By the time night had fallen, they had enough timber gathered to carry out Jack's plan.

The night passed by quietly.

On the following morning, the work began.

It was a great undertaking, and it required several days to finish the massive, inclined platform.

But the work was finally completed.

It was late at night when this was done.

They were all exhausted and turned to rest.

None of them had the strength left to attempt the ascent with the locomotive that night.

They slept soundly.

Too soundly.

For while they were deeply slumbering, a number of men came down the defile like a band of shadows, numbering twenty all told.

Silas Redburn was leading them on.

They were a band of natives whom he had armed and impressed into his service in an effort to find the Death Valley.

Ascending the river Menom in boats from Bangkok as far as

Kiang Khong, they had heard of the advent of the engine in that region.

Losing no time, they got upon the trail of the locomotive.

It was easy to track her, as the course she took led her from village to village, and when the mountain region was reached her trail was easily followed.

In this manner, they reached the defile that day, and by spying upon our friend's actions, saw what they were doing.

The natives had been lured on by the story of the lost mine and its promise of remunerating the rascals well for their fealty.

The bridge from the valley offered an easy means of descent and the silent band stole down toward the Thunder Gust.

Never suspecting danger of any kind, our friends did not take the trouble to lock the doors.

Redburn and his followers, therefore, had no trouble.

While a crowd of them surrounded the locomotive, the first officer of the Sea-Lady, followed by two of the most desperate of the crowd, crept into the rear door.

They carried revolvers in their hands.

The heavy breathing of the sleepers told them plainly that Jack and his companions were lying helpless.

But just as they entered the monkey saw them, and uttering a terrific yell of alarm, he flew into the sleeping apartment.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAUGHT IN TREACHEROUS SANDS.

"Move an inch, and you are a dead man!"

Jack gave a violent start as these words were hissed in his ear.

He glanced up and beheld Redburn.

The renegade was aiming a revolver at his head.

One glance at Tim and Fritz showed him that they were in a similar predicament at the hands of the two natives.

The young inventor was intensely startled.

Redburn was the last person he expected to see there.

"Don't fire! I submit!" he exclaimed.

"Good! I see you value your life!"

"In heaven's name, how came you here?"

"Tracked you, of course," laughed the man.

"But I thought——"

"Imagined you killed me in the gulf?"

"No, for I saw you on board the lightship."

"What was you about to say?"

"I thought it was impossible for you to track us."

"Where the trail was lost, we inquired the route you followed."

"Fool I was not to have disguised my movements."

"Regrets are useless now."

"What do you propose doing?"

"Relieve you of the jewels you have found."

"How do you know we have any?"

"From your conversation to-day."

"Ha! Then you have been spying on us?"

"Ever since this morning."

Here was another matter of surprise to Jack.

While they had been at work building the platform, these rascals had been quietly watching and listening to them.

It made the young inventor furious.

Just then Redburn called in some more of his men.

"Bind these prisoners," said he, in their native language.

"Say," exclaimed Jack, "you've got a crowd, haven't you?"

"Twenty natives!" triumphantly replied the rascal.

Jack's astonishment increased.

"Then you were determined to find this valley?"

"Ay, and to avenge the injury you did me."

As Redburn spoke, he stepped back to allow his men to secure Jack.

No sooner was the pistol turned away when the young inventor bounded to his feet like a rubber ball.

He lurched himself against Redburn and, knocking the pistol from his hand, dealt the man an awful blow with his fist.

A cry of alarm arose from the startled officer.

He was knocked against the wall.

The men who entered to bind Jack sprang at him.

Ere they could get their hands upon him, he snatched up the pistol from the floor and aimed it at them.

They recoiled in alarm.

Jack rushed into the wheel house.

Turning the electric current into the body of the locomotive, he caused it to electrify the barefooted Siamese.

In a moment there was a wild chorus of yells.

Then a general panic.

Followed by a stampede.

Jack started the locomotive.

Away she flew across the valley.

As soon as the current ceased, the natives jumped off.

Thinking that he had momentarily evaded his enemies, Jack stopped the Thunder Gust and shouted:

"Tim! Fritz!"

No reply was given.

Grasping the pistol, he ran into the back rooms.

All the natives, Redburn, Tim and Fritz were gone.

While escaping, the natives had dragged the Dutchman and the sailor with them and held them prisoners.

Jack was thoroughly dismayed at this discovery.

All he had saved was the engine and its contents.

His two friends were in the power of his enemies.

"By heavens! This is hard luck!" he exclaimed.

He glanced back toward Redburn's party.

They had taken up a position at the foot of the bridge.

It gave Jack plainly to understand what their plan was.

"They intend to guard the platform so I can't get out of here!" he muttered.

That was exactly what the rascals meant to do.

Jack was in a quandary.

He did not know what to do.

Fearing a surprise, he drove the engine out upon a plain.

Here he could see the approach of any one from any direction.

Several hours passed by.

Finally the day began to break.

The sun arose.

He saw Redburn and several of the Siamese approach the stream.

They waded in and began to search the bed of the creek for jewels.

In this they were successful.

A number of valuable gems were found.

It was announced by a shout of joy from the Siamese and a rush for them was made by the rest.

They clustered around the lucky ones and closely examined the jewels, in the meantime chattering like a lot of magpies.

A number of them remained at the bridge to guard the prisoners.

Jack saw his two friends.

They laid on the ground, bound hand and foot.

Suddenly a wild cry reached his ears.

It came from some of the men in the water.

Jack saw them floundering about in the creek, shouting, waving their arms and making frantic efforts to get ashore.

Wondering what caused the panic, he leveled a glass at them.

The reason became apparent at once.

Some of them had slipped into a bed of quicksand.

Those who avoided it reached the shore in safety.

Half a dozen of the unfortunates remained.

Their feet were tightly clutched by the treacherous sand.

Every moment they sunk deeper until they were buried to their knees.

Down they kept going until they were half under.

Their companions on the shore were frantically rushing to and fro, shouting advice and encouragement to them.

One of them had sense enough to cut a long vine and fling the end of it to one of the imperiled men.

Eagerly he grasped it.

Several seized the other end and pulled.

They dragged the man from the tenacious clutch of the sand after a good deal of struggling and landed him on the shore.

An effort was then made to reach the rest.

But nothing could be done for them.

They were sunk too deep to aid them from shore.

By the time an effort was made to pull them out, they were buried almost to their arms, and were still going down.

Their cries of terror were pitiful to hear.

It made Jack shudder to listen to them.

"I wonder if I could save them?" he muttered.

Enemies though they were, he was so good hearted he could not bear to see them perish before his eyes without making an effort to save them if he could.

An idea occurred to him.

He hastily procured a number of short ropes.

Then he returned to the pilot house and started the Thunder Gust.

Away he rushed toward the creek, his bell clanging a warning for the natives to get out of the way.

In a few moments she reached the stream.

None of the natives realized what Jack's intention was.

They repaid his kindness by shooting at the engine, but as she was invulnerable, they did no damage.

Jack shouted to Redburn as the engine rolled by him:

"Stop them and I'll save your friends."

The officer shouted something to his followers and they stopped firing immediately.

On ran the locomotive until the bed of quicksand was passed.

Then Jack deliberately steered her into the creek.

The water boiled around the revolving wheels as she plunged into it, and poured in around the young inventor's feet and legs, as she proceeded out to the deepest part.

Jack kept his glance fixed upon the color of the bottom.

By this means he could see where the quicksand bed was, and thus managed to go close without getting into it.

All he could see of the jeopardized men was their head and arms.

Looks of horrible alarm distorted their dark features.

Stopping the engine opposite them, Jack grasped the short ropes and made slip nooses in the end of five of them.

Bunching the other ends, he flung open the rear door of the locomotive and fastened them to a ring bolt.

Then he flung a noose to each one of the sinking men.

Realizing that he had come to help them, they knew enough to slip the nooses over their shoulders and under their arm-pits.

As soon as they were ready, Jack returned to the lever.

Pulling one, he started the engine slowly ahead.

Her hauling power was tremendous.

The ropes became as rigid as iron bars.

A fearful strain was brought to bear upon them.

While the tenacious sand strove to hold them in its deadly embrace, the locomotive tugged to haul them out.

All the crowd on shore became silent.

They crowded along the embankment and eagerly, anxiously, and suspensefully watched the operation.

Steadily ahead went the engine.

The nooses tightened around the bodies of the unfortunates and caused them to yell with pain.

Every one of them felt as if he was being pulled apart, and their anguish became so great that they did not care whether the quicksand swallowed them up or not.

But Jack did not desist in his efforts to save them.

CHAPTER XV.

HELD BY A VIPER.

Tim and Fritz, in the meantime, had not been idle, although their wrists were bound behind their backs and their legs were tied together.

When the excitement arose, their guards left them.

They had seen that the two prisoners were securely bound, and never dreamed of such a thing as their attempting to escape.

As soon as they were left unguarded, however, Tim muttered:

"Fritz, roll over here quick."

"Vot yer vant?" guardedly asked the Dutchman.

"We must get out o' this, my hearty!"

"How ve can, tied oop dot vay like dis?"

"Can't yer chaw the knots on my wrists open?"

"By der shumpin' Sherusalems! I didn't vos tink ohf dot."

Tim turned over on his stomach.

In a moment more Fritz had begun operations.

It was hard and awkward work to use his teeth.

But they finally accomplished the object in view.

By the time it was done, Jack had pulled the natives from the quicksand, and the guards came back toward them.

Quick as a flash, Tim pulled out a pocketknife and severed his own and Fritz's bonds.

Springing to their feet they attracted the attention of the guards.

Their freedom was discovered.

A veritable howl escaped the Siamese.

They made a rush for the two.

"Away wi' ye! They're a-comin'!" roared Tim.

"Don't stay by der wally!" Fritz gasped.

"Wot else kin we do?"

"Run oop by der defile."

This plan was followed.

Several shots were fired after them.

But none of the screaming bullets hit them.

Up the bridge they rushed and reached the defile.

The Siamese began to run after them, but the sailor and his friend picked up a number of rocks and hurled them down at the natives who were ascending the bridge.

As this bombardment struck them, the natives halted.

Some of them were knocked down into the valley again with broken heads and the rest beat a retreat.

"Shiminey, Dim, keeb id ub!" excitedly cried Fritz, as he sent rock after rock crashing down into the crowd.

"Ay, ay! Give them another broadside, my lad!" cheerily answered the old sailor, sending missile after missile down.

They held an advantageous position.

Unless the natives got squarely in front of the defile, they could not aim their weapons at our friends.

And when they did so, there were so many niches in the walls that Tim and Fritz easily screened their bodies.

"Blast me if we couldn't hold this place agin a million o' such lubbers," laughed the old sailor, enthusiastically.

"Vot vhas Shack doin'?"

They glanced at the engine.

She had pulled the natives out of the sand.

Proceeding to the shore to which she dragged them, she came to a pause, and their friends released them.

This was hardly done when Redburn took one of the ropes and swiftly tied the front and back wheels of the locomotive together.

When Jack attempted to move her, he found that he could not.

"Mein Gott! Dey vos caughted him!" groaned Fritz.

"The ongrateful pirates!" cried Tim, angrily.

"See dot—dey dry ter got in at him now."

"But they don't. Jack's got the doors locked."

They saw the Siamese swarming all around the locomotive, and a few moments afterwards a shot ripped from her gun.

It struck several of the most belligerent.

Then it burst.

The natives were blown to fragments.

Jack was then seen going from one loophole to another armed with repeating rifles, and pouring a disastrous fire out at the ungrateful rascals.

Every shot told.

He meant they should.

The young inventor's anger was aroused.

After what he had done, he did not expect them to repay his kindness by trying to kill and rob him.

"Dim!" said Fritz suddenly. "Ohf ve could got dose son-ohf-a-sea-gooks away from dot locomotives for a few minutes, Shack could cut dot ropes vot plnd der vheels, und oberated der Dunder Cust."

"Ah, ay, but wot kin we do without weapings?"

"Follow me, und I show you alretty."

He ran along the defile till he reached the end, and gathered a number of stones.

"Pelt 'em," said he.

"Ah! Now I understan'," said Tim.

They let a shower of the missiles fly down at the heads of the crowd below, causing a panic when a number of them were hit.

Stone after stone flew through the air from the top of the cliff down at the running Siamese.

They all headed for the bridge.

Getting under it they were protected.

Jack ceased shooting at them immediately.

He had seen what his friends did for him.

Leaving the machine he severed the binding rope.

Then he rapidly drove the Thunder Gust away into the valley.

At the distance of a league he stopped her and looking up at the cliff saw the sailor and the Dutchman following the rocks along to the southwestward.

"Thar's a low p'int over yonder by which we kin git down inter ther walley an' help Jack," said the old sea dog, pointing to a depression a mile or more ahead.

"Yer vos mean to use some ohf dem wires?"

"Jist the same's ther desarters from the Lone Star did."

They went on until they reached the point in question.

Procuring a number of long, thick, tough vines that grew in profusion around there, they fastened them together, fashioning a lengthy enough rope to reach down to the bed of the valley.

When it was finished they signaled to Jack.

He drove the locomotive toward them.

In a short time the locomotive paused beneath them.

"Coming down?" he shouted.

"Ay, lad, as soon's we rig a hawser."

"I tie me dot wine to dis rock," said Fritz.

"Heave ahead, an' I'll risk goin' down first."

Fritz secured the vine, and dropped the other end over the rocks at a spot where it would not chafe and cut.

Accustomed to this mode of climbing, Tim swung himself off, and began to go down hand over hand.

The men under Redburn's command now saw our friends coming down from the cliff.

Burning for vengeance, they ran toward them.

The Dutchman and sailor offered an excellent target for their weapons, and they resolved to shoot them.

Along they sped at the top of their speed.

Tim saw them.

He realized that they intended to get in shooting range.

Filled with alarm lest Fritz might not be able to follow him, he shouted up to him:

"Foller me—hurry—or you're lost."

"I don'd seen me noddings to bodder apoud."

"Looker Redburn's men!"

"Oh, holy chee! Dey coom dis vay alretty."

"Come down quick, or you'll git shot!"

"All right, Dim. Go aheth. Dot wine vill bear der both of us."

Tim had almost reached the bottom by this time.

Fritz was not quite half way down.

A sharp snap was heard beneath him.

Startled, he glanced below, and saw that one of the points they had made to fasten two of the vines together had parted midway between the valley bed and the crown of the cliffs.

Tim fell a short distance to the bottom.

He left Fritz clinging to the swaying vine fifty feet from the bed of the valley, unable to descend any further.

A cry of consternation escaped the young Dutchman.

He could not climb to the top now, for the vine lay flat against the face of the cliff up there and offered no hold for his hands.

To increase the terror of his position he heard a rattling in a wide crevice in the cliff in front of him.

A moment later the head and body of a viper appeared.

It was the most venomous snake in Siam, a mere scratch of its fangs being sufficient to produce a horrible death.

Fastening its gleaming eyes upon the startled Dutchman it rapidly moved its forked tongue in and out of its mouth, arched its head, and curved back its neck.

Fritz dared not move or cry out, for to do so would hasten his death, so he remained there with bulging eyes glaring at it in horror, wondering when it was going to deal him its death bite.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUNNING DOWN SOME FAST GAME.

Tim rolled over upon the ground, the broken vine falling upon him, but he hastily arose and dashed aboard the locomotive to apprise Jack of the Dutchman's peril.

Jack gazed at Fritz a moment, and saw the viper.

Smothering a cry of alarm, he grasped a revolver he had captured, rushed out on the footrail, and taking quick aim, put a bullet into the viper just as it was about to bury its fangs in Fritz.

"Bull's eye!" yelled the Dutchman, gleefully.

Tim then hurled up a rope to Fritz, who caught it and, tying it to the vine, came down in safety.

"Safe!" he gasped as he came aboard the locomotive. "Who expected it?"

"You couldn't have been worse."

Starting the engine, Jack asked Fritz for an account of his escape.

The young Dutchman did so and at the conclusion of his recital Jack told what had befallen himself.

Redburn and his minions were left far behind.

Jack had thus far explored only that side of the valley lying on the side of the creek where they were.

It now occurred to him to examine the other side.

With this purpose in view he found a shallow place in the stream and sent the engine across.

"We may find a means of getting out of here on this side," he said to his companions. "The case has resolved itself into this shape: Redburn means to guard the bridge so we can't get out that way. He has made up his mind to avenge himself upon us for what he considers the injuries we have done him. Besides that, he knows very well that we have a fortune in diamonds on the Thunder Gust and means to rob us of them."

"Couldn't we charge on ther bridge?" suggested Tim. "Thar ain't nothin' could withstand a rush from this engine. Ther bullets they fire couldn't reach us. An' I don't worry well see how they could perwent us a-gainin' ther defile."

"Fer sure," assented Fritz. "All dem could done would make us noddings out alretty. Dot's yust vot I would do. Dim, how you got some common senses like dot all at vunct?"

"I am willing to follow that suggestion," said Jack in thoughtful tones. "To take them off their guard, however, it will be best to keep away from them awhile. We can thus manage to see if there isn't an opening in the wall on this side of the valley by means of which we can escape."

The engine crossed a sandy plain.

It soon reached the great wall.

She was then turned southward.

As she went crashing into a jungle some distance along the route she scared up two beautiful big elks.

They glanced at the locomotive with wild eyes, and taking fright they rushed away to the plain on the other side of the jungle.

Fritz instinctively snatched up a rifle.

Upon observing his action, Jack cried quickly:

"Wait! Don't fire at them, Fritz!"

"How yer could let such peaudiful deers go?"

"I don't intend to. I'm going to catch them alive."

"Alife? How dot vos bossible alretty?"

"Watch me, and you'll see."

And with this admonition, Jack put on more current.

The electricity sent the locomotive flying ahead rapidly, and she was steered squarely in pursuit of the fleet-footed elks.

Seeing the engine chasing them, they exerted all their speed.

Reaching the plain they made faster progress, but this sort of ground favored the locomotive as well.

The electric sparks fairly flew from her wheels in showers as she tore along after the fugitive beasts.

The elks kept close together, their heads thrown up, and their slender but powerful legs flying over the ground so fast that it almost seemed as if they barely touched it.

Mile after mile was passed over.

"We are gaining on them!" said Jack presently.

"Pully for us!" cried the excited Dutchman.

"Don't you notice how fast we are closing up the gap?"

"No animile kin stan' agin a engine fer endurance," said Tim.

The locomotive was overtaking the animals now.

Slowly but surely she crept up behind them, and upon seeing that they were losing ground the elks spurred ahead faster.

Their strength was inadequate to keeping up the awful pace for a much longer period, and although they had gained a trifle by the spurt they had made in a few moments they fell behind again.

Panting and exhausted, yet heroic to the last, they plunged ahead, and went into a second jungle.

The grass here was so dense that for a few minutes Jack lost all trace of them.

Presently, however, he caught sight of their heads bobbing up and down over the top of the grass ahead.

They had deviated from their first course a trifle.

The flying wheels of the locomotive crushed down the grass as the engine forced its way along, and in a short time the inmates of the Thunder Gust caught sight of the animals' bodies.

But ten yards now separated them from the machine.

Jack put the wheel in Tim's hands.

"Manage her," he remarked.

Then he took a long-bladed hunting-knife, and passing out upon the platform, he went up forward.

He could hear the hoarse panting of the animals now.

At one glance he made a selection of his game.

It was the largest animal of the pair.

As soon as the locomotive ran up to the desperate creature Jack reached out and grasped one of its horns.

"Pursue the other!" he shouted.

Then he made a catlike spring.

It landed him astride of the elk's back.

Swerving to the right the doubly terrified animals plunged in one direction, carrying Jack along on its back, while the Thunder Gust rushed along after the other elk.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EMERALD IDOL.

Frantic with fright, the elk headed toward the densest part of the jungle, where various kinds of bushes, plants, and trees intermingled with the tall, waving grass.

Jack clung tenaciously to its back.

He resolved to let it exhaust itself.

In a few moments it reached the bushes, and the bamboos cracked and went down before its flight like so many pipe stems.

Within a few moments it burst from the shrubbery.

Ahead there was a clearing.

Into this place it crashed like a thunderbolt.

Then its legs gave away, and it fell on its knees.

Had the young inventor not been hanging on tightly he would have been hurled from its back.

Before the beast could recover itself Jack killed it.

The carcass fell over in front of him.

It would serve as food for a long time.

The excitement of the hunt vanished as soon as the animal was dead, and Jack glanced around.

To his intense astonishment he observed a huge temple standing embowered amid the wild foliage at one side of the clearing—a temple of the Siamese style of architecture.

In back of it there stood the ruins of what had once been a large and populous village, all overgrown with moss and creeping vines, shrubs, and fungus.

"This place must have been inhabited," muttered Jack.

The pagoda was a remarkable one.

It was built entirely of carved stone.

The roof rose in the center like a church steeple, and it had four wings, each wing being roofed in a series of gables terminating in long, gracefully-curved points.

It was green and crimson, decorated with blue and gold.

Jack ascended the steps, and saw the outer walls decorated with various carved devices and rows upon rows of hideous images on one knee, their hands raised flush with their steeple crown hats.

At each side of the staircase stood the hideous carved figure of two colossal men dressed as Siamese soldiers.

Jack entered the door and found himself in a vast, gloomy room.

From the roof depended immense chandeliers. There were numerous carved columns, and in the center a raised platform approached by a flight of marble stairs.

To the young inventor's horror he saw that those stairs were strewn with hundreds of skulls and human bones.

On top of the dais was a pedestal richly ornamented with incrustations of magnificent diamonds, sapphires, and mother of pearl.

An idol in a squatting, cross-legged position stood on the pedestal.

Jack picked his way among the bones.

Ascending he looked at it carefully.

It was an ugly object about two feet high.

But it was made of solid emerald in one piece.

It was a statue of the Siamese Buddha, or god.

The object was very valuable.

So was its magnificent pedestal.

Jack next turned his attention to his surroundings.

The great temple had a deserted, empty, gloomy look.

Dust and dirt filled every nook and crevice, and it had the appearance of having been vacated many years.

Scattered among the human bones on the stairs were numerous offerings of rich and costly toys which had been brought to the shrine of the idol by pilgrims.

They were magnificent golden objects, beautifully carved and heavily set with precious stones.

Perhaps there is no country in the world more lavish with its costly and magnificent objects of this kind than Siam.

Jack examined the relics.

"A king's ransom here" he muttered.

Then he strode from the temple, and went in among the houses where he found the same state of affairs.

Hundreds of human remains lay scattered in the streets, houses, and lanes much as if every soul in the place had perished at the same time through some awful cataclasm.

Everywhere Jack went he found evidences of a noble race whose implements were far in advance of those of their race who then dwelt in access of civilization at Bangkok.

There had once been a great clearing around the settlement, but from years of neglect the trees and bushes had grown up in the houses as well as out of doors.

Roofs had fallen in, walls had crumbled away, pillars had fallen, and not a building but the temple remained intact.

Jack returned to the queer looking pagoda.

It was his intention to take possession of the emerald idol.

Mounting the steps to the top of the dais, he reached out his hand and grasped the queer object.

At the same moment a square slab of marble gave way under his feet, disclosing a black recess, into which he fell.

A cry of alarm involuntarily left him.

But he could not save himself.

Down into the gloom he dropped heavily.

Then his body struck a flight of wooden stairs.

It gave away with a dull crash, as it was rotten.

Jack's descent continued, but he had not much further to go.

Had the staircase not broken his fall he would have broken his neck; but he now reached the bottom with no dangerous mishap.

He landed flat on his back.

There was a brief shock.

But he was on his feet in a moment more.

"What a lucky escape!" he muttered gratefully. "I thought I was going down a distance of a mile."

It was so gloomy he could not see anything but the square aperture overhead, through which a faint, sickly light straggled.

Jack was provided with matches, however, and finding a piece of the broken staircase, he ignited it, and built a bonfire.

A strange, unearthly scene met his view.

He was in a vast crypt.

Ranged along the four walls of the gloomy burial place, facing the center of the room, were rows of enormous white elephants carved out of the purest alabaster stone.

They were perfect in every detail, showing a skill at sculpture seldom equaled by our most noted artists.

These silent mammoths were standing guard over a magnificent golden urn on a table of ebony in the middle of the gloomy room.

Jack was dumfounded at the strange spectacle.

He stepped up to the table.

Lifting the cover of the urn he peered in.

It contained but a handful of ashes.

"The remains of the ruler of this place," he thought.

It was clear that these people enveloped their dead potentates in splendid inflammable pagodas and cremated them as they do in all the large cities of Siam.

Jack yet retained the emerald idol.

He dumped the ashes from the urn and put the idol in it.

Picking up the urn, and taking a flaming fire-brand, he strode to a massive door set in the marble masonry.

It was unlocked.

He pushed it open and passed through.

It led him to a vaulted subterranean passage.

Following it for a distance of one hundred yards, he reached a second door, which he flung open.

A flood of dazzling sunlight streamed in.

For a moment it blinded him, but as soon as he became accustomed to it he glanced around to see where he was.

In front of him lay the ruins of what must once have been a wooden building of some kind.

It lay in a depression in back of the village, which was built in the form of a vast arena, surrounded by innumerable tiers of stone seats.

Having become so much accustomed to the manners and customs of the people of this country, Jack understood at once what use the place had been put to.

The Siamese's chief amusements were cock-fighting, dog-fighting and combats between fishes called plaxon.

In the depression were seen numerous peacocks, parroquets, tailless cats, huge pajas or white monkeys, gazelles, takuets or lizards and no end of other creatures.

Several discolored coins caught Jack's attention lying on the ground amid a lot of pottery and rubbish.

He picked them up and saw that they were silver fuangs, salungs and tickals of a very ancient date.

After going to the top of a nearby hill the young inventor caught sight of the temple among the trees and made his way back.

He had scarcely reached the clearing when he heard the unmistakable sound of the locomotive approaching.

It came through the jungle on the trail left by the elk, and Tim hailed him as soon as he appeared.

The best portions of the elk were taken aboard, and Jack then showed his friends the idol and the urn, and gave them an account of what had befallen him.

Tim and Fritz were surprised.

They spent two days on the spot digging the priceless gem out of the pedestal in the pagoda.

It was then decided to continue their journey southward.

Unfortunately no opening appeared by means of which they could get out of the valley, and they had to turn back.

It was in the middle of the night when they reached the bridge, and to their surprise saw nothing of Redburn or his men.

"They may be lurking near here," said Jack dubiously.

"Are yer a-goin' ter rush ther engine up ther bridge?" asked Tim.

"I am, and here she goes. Get ready!"

And pulling the battery lever over to its fullest extent Jack caused the locomotive to dash ahead furiously toward the structure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUT OF THE VALLEY.

"Halt!"

The locomotive had reached the foot of the bridge, when this shout rang out in the voice of Silas Redburn.

Jack glanced up.

The man stood at the mouth of the defile.

He held an ax upraised in his hands over the anchorage of rope.

One blow of that keen blade would sever the rope, weaken the bridge, and it would probably fall under the weight of the engine.

Jack cut off the current and put on the brake.

"He's got us!" he gasped.

"Mein Got!" groaned Fritz.

Tim was armed with an air gun.

He took quick aim at the renegade and fired.

There sounded a sharp explosion as the bullet struck the man squarely on the forehead, and Redburn dropped dead without the slightest sound.

"It wuz his life or ours!" said Tim.

"Good Heaven! What did you do that for?" cried Jack, angrily.

"Did yer want him ter murder us?"

"No, of course not."

"Well, he'd a-did it if I hadn't nailed him."

As Tim said this he rapidly loaded the pneumatic gun.

Aiming it at the defile, he fired it.

The projectile burst with a roar like thunder.

"Drive her ahead!" cried Tim.

There sounded a chorus of shrieks in the voices of the natives, and Jack pulled the lever.

Up on the bridge dashed the engine.

A volley of shots rang out from down in the valley, on either side of the bridge, where most of the natives lay in ambush, and the bullets pounded the locomotive all over.

She sped to the top of the bridge.

No sooner was she into the defile when Tim rushed back in the store-room and took some hand grenades from a box.

Opening the rear door he let them drive at the bridge, where they exploded, and tore the structure to pieces.

"That will keep them lubbers from follerin us!" he cried.

"Donner vedder! Ve got dem like rets by a drap!" chuckled Fritz.

"Ay, ay, but thar's some o' them ahead yet."

They hastened up forward.

Jack was sending the engine through the defile furiously.

In advance of her he saw several of Redburn's men running for their lives, in terror of the engine now.

The young inventor fired several shots over their heads to intimidate them, and pulled the whistle cord.

An ear-splitting shriek arose.

Its sound was magnified by the confines of the defile.

With clanking machinery and a jangling of the bell the Thunder Gust flew along to the end of the passage.

As soon as she opened up the clear ground of the plateau our friends felt an intense sense of relief.

"Whar's them natives gone?" asked Tim.

"Hidden behind the rocks," Jack replied.

"Ve don't been drubbed by dem some more now."

"No," replied Jack. "And now to get back to Bangkok."

"How are yer goin' ter shape yer course?" asked the sailor.

"Along the Menam river."

"Dot vos besser as der vay ve coom here."

"A great deal, as we will find roads there when we leave this wild region," said Jack.

They had seen the last of the great Death Valley.

The object for which they had set out was accomplished, and it now merely remained for them to find their way back to the capital and return aboard the yacht.

A course from the Poo Pungso mountains was laid out, and the engine was steered for the lowlands.

By daylight this was accomplished.

She then headed for the southwest to reach the river.

She reached the SeNgum river and finally passed into a hilly region.

On the following night she reached Puan.

Here a range of rather low mountains began.

They were covered with woods and jungles from which rose the cries of wild beasts, making the air hideous.

"We will have to advance with caution now," exclaimed Jack as he steered the engine along a track used occasionally by the pony caravans that passed that way from China.

"They ses as it's a dangerous road, when we wuz in Puan," said Tim.

"Very. I'm afraid we've got the worst part of our journey ahead of us."

"Lieber Gott!" exclaimed Fritz, peering out the window as an unearthly shriek was heard. "Vot you call that?"

"A leopard, I fancy," replied Jack.

It was a very dark night.

To see where they were going it was necessary to keep the rays of the powerful searchlight reflected ahead.

Peering through the window they saw the beast that uttered that blood-curdling yell.

The massive, cat-like body flew across their path.

For a brief space they saw its glaring eyeballs, looking like coals of fire, and then it rushed away and vanished.

Jack and his companions were horrified.

As they passed the spot where it disappeared they saw it suddenly leap from the dense underbrush like an arrow.

The beast landed on top of the wheel-house with a bang.

Once more its horrible cry broke the silence.

Then it clawed at the metal roof; they heard it run to the back of the vehicle, and then it jumped off.

A deep sense of relief took possession of the trio when it was gone, and Jack remarked dryly:

"It was fortunate for us that the brute could not get in here. Ah, what's that—a light ahead there?"

"Looks like it," assented Tim, squinting out.

It was a faint, dim glow some distance further on among the trees.

As they drew nearer to it they heard excited voices and observed that the light came from a small bamboo hut among the trees.

The words were in the Siamese language.

A man and a woman were talking.

When the locomotive had drawn within fifty yards of the

hut there sounded a splitting and crashing noise, followed by a deep, hoarse growling in the tones of several beasts.

Jack flashed the searchlight upon the hut.

A startled exclamation burst from his lips.

It was echoed by a wild cry from the hut.

Going in at the door were two large bears.

They had broken down the door, and the cries came from the people who lived in the fragile dwelling.

These were the first creatures of this kind our friends had seen in their journey through the country, and they were not very favorably impressed with the appearance of the monsters.

"Fritz, take the wheel!" cried Jack.

He had sent the locomotive rushing toward the hut, and as the young Dutchman assumed command of her he took a brace of pistols from the rack and hastened out.

Leaping to the ground near the door of the hut, he rushed inside where the terrified cries of children were added to the frightened shouts of the man and woman.

There was a light in the single room.

A dreadful spectacle met Jack's view.

The bears had attacked the countryman's family.

Upon the floor laid the unfortunate man bleeding and senseless, with the biggest brute of the two standing over him.

The woman, with several children clinging to her, had been driven into a corner by the other animal.

As quick as a flash Jack fired several shots in rapid succession, the bullets taking effect in the body of the beast that menaced the fallen man.

A hoarse growl of pain escaped it.

The brute suddenly wheeled around, facing Jack.

Startled by the shots, the other one recoiled from the woman.

The next instant both brutes started toward Jack, and he took several steps backward, when his foot struck a mat.

It tripped him, and he fell backward.

Down he went in a heap, and his body struck the wall.

He had no time to rise.

The foremost bear was too near him.

Resting one elbow on the ground, he raised one of his pistols and fired a shot point blank in its face.

A fearful cry of pain and rage escaped the animal as the bullet tore the side of its head away.

It fell to the ground, rolled over and over, and fiercely pawed at the wound, meantime uttering a deep, puffing sound.

Seeing a chance to escape the frightened woman rushed out of the hut with her children.

The young inventor bounded to his feet.

He saw that he had little to fear from the wounded bear.

The other one, though, was coming toward him with great speed, and he raised his pistol to fire again.

In order to insure an effective shot, Jack waited until the animal was within a yard of the muzzle of his weapon.

He saw the baleful look in its fierce eyes and realized that it was fully bent upon his destruction.

Assured now that he had it entirely at his mercy, he took deliberate aim and pressed the trigger.

To his alarm the weapon failed to respond.

Every ball had been expended when he first attacked the brutes, and the pistol was then useless.

Still, he had the other one.

Dropping the unavailable weapon, he raised the other.

Before he could use it the bear reached him and with one blow of its paw almost broke his arm.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE HANDS OF THIEVES.

The force of that terrific blow knocked the pistol from Jack's hand and slammed him up against the wall.

For a brief space his nerves tingled and his muscles seemed paralyzed.

While he was thus stunned and inactive the bear charged on him.

He attempted to leap out of its way but failed.

In another instant the brute rose on its hind legs, caught Jack in a terrible embrace, and pulled him over to its hairy body.

Then it squeezed him.

He fairly groaned from the pressure.

A low, fierce growl caused him to dart a quick glance up at the brute, and he observed a formidable row of teeth in its red mouth.

It looked as if it was about to tear him to pieces.

Jack struggled to get away.

He was held in such a position he could not move.

His arms were pinioned to his side by the powerful front legs of the bear, and his body was pressed tightly against the brute.

At this moment when everything seemed blackest, Tim came in.

The old sailor carried a rifle.

If he fired he ran the risk of the exploding bullet injuring the young inventor, but he had to do it.

The weapon was discharged.

So close to Jack did the ball burst that it almost deafened him.

A convulsive tremor passed over the animal, a roar like muttering thunder came from its throat, its grip on Jack relaxed, and it toppled over.

The young inventor sprang back.

He cast a hurried glance at the animal.

"Dead!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Ay," roared Tim. "Did it with my eye closed."

"The glass one?" laughed Jack.

"Lordy, no; t'other one,"

"Kill the other brute."

Tim complied.

One shot at close range did it.

No sooner was the animal dispatched when the woman came in with her children, and rushing over to her husband, she flung herself down beside him, and weeping copiously, called him by name.

He was merely knocked senseless.

Jack and Tim revived him with some trouble, and his wife bandaged the wounds inflicted by the bear's claws.

He was surprised to find himself alive.

Addressing our friends in his own language, he made an effort to make himself understood, but failed.

Seeing that both bears were dead, and hearing his wife's description of how our friends had dispatched them, his gratitude knew no bounds, and his fervent thanks were endless.

Jack and Tim recovered their weapons.

They then took their leave of the pair.

Returning aboard of the locomotive, they made Fritz acquainted with the facts, and the engine continued on her way.

On the following day they were out of the mountains and in the valley of the big river.

It was at the time of the yearly inundation.

The waters had risen, overflowed the banks, and flooded the surrounding country for many miles.

This flood, like that of the Nile, is all the natives have to

depend upon for the fertility of the soil and the success of their crops.

The resident Phajas, or functionaries of the highest rank in the different localities, then conducted an imposing ceremony.

It is the custom of the First King to depute hundreds of bonzes in state barges on the river, and issue a royal mandate to the waters to recede, accompanying the exorcisms of their fanatical religion.

All the phajas follow this example, and when the engine ran along the flooded banks they witnessed the gayest pageants on the water as hundreds of boats passed up and down the stream.

These boats were called sampans, mapets, ma-k'engs, maguens, etc., and the varieties of costumes of their crews ranged from the long flowing dress of the Mussulmans to the scanty pan-hungs of the natives.

In consequence of the inundation the Thunder Gust was obliged to make wide detours to escape the water, which lengthened her journey.

When the gloom of night enveloped the earth, the Thunder Gust came to a pause on the bank of the Sau-hi river, between Angtang and Ayuthia, the former capital of Siam.

It was necessary to cross this stream, but there was no bridge to do so, and Fritz was sent off on a scouting expedition to find a boat.

After a lapse of an hour he came down the river with a large crowd of men on an enormous bamboo raft which he had hired.

There were a dozen of the men upon it, propelling the raft with long poles, until they brought it to a pause near where the engine stood.

One of the Siamese spoke a little French, and Jack said to him:

"We will pay you one hundred tikals to ferry us over."

"It shall be done," eagerly assented the man.

Assisted by Jack and his friends they ran the locomotive upon the raft and began poling it across the stream.

When in midchannel, to the astonishment of the three, the natives sprang upon them, knocked them down, and pinioned their arms.

It was evidently a preconcerted arrangement.

Rendered helpless, our friends were left lying upon the big raft.

Reaching the opposite shore, the natives pushed the engine ashore.

Then they went through her and discovered the box of diamonds.

Every other article they had picked up to steal was abandoned for the precious stones, as they knew the value of them well.

Carrying the treasure box onto the raft, and taking several heavy stones with it, jabbering in low, excited tones, the thieves poled it out on the river.

A feeling of blank dismay overwhelmed our friends.

They saw the engine swallowed up in the gloom as it stood on the bank of the river, and then lost sight of the shore as the raft was propelled down the stream.

CHAPTER XX.

FINIS.

Jack and his comrades were deeply chagrined.

The attack was entirely unexpected.

Consequently the robbers had been completely surprised.

"After all our trouble to get the treasure, this is a bitter pill to swallow!" exclaimed Jack, in exasperated tones.

"We ain't got a dog's show ter help ourselves now, blast 'em!" growled Tim. "I'm tied so tight my blood can't circulate."

"Und me neider!" groaned Fritz savagely. "If dey would gif me a bistol und set me free for yust vun minutes, I'd show 'em how easy I could blug deir hets full of holes!"

Several of the thieves squatted cross-legged near the prisoners to guard them, and the rest poled the raft.

It glided slowly down the Menam.

No moon or stars appeared above.

There were numerous boats going up and down the river, and their occupants paid no heed to the raft, as it could not be seen distinctly in the gloom.

At some distance from where the locomotive had been left the natives stopped poling.

They gathered in a group at one side and began to whisper.

The result of this conference was soon made known to their prisoners, for several of them approached.

Picking up the stones they had taken from the shore, they began to bind them to our friends' feet.

As soon as Jack saw this he anticipated their object.

"They are weighting us to sink our bodies in the stream," he muttered.

"Gee whiz! is that so?" asked Tim in alarm.

"Let's holler like a son ohf a gun!" suggested Fritz.

"It won't do any good," replied Jack despairingly, "for none of the natives will see why we are yelling until it's too late."

It seemed as if this was so.

Still Fritz was not going to let an opportunity to save his life slip by.

He began to yell for help with all the strength of his lungs, and it so angered his captors that they sprang on him and gagged him.

Just then a swash of water was heard ahead, and a large dark object loomed up in the gloom before the raft.

It was a large vessel of some kind.

While some of the raftsmen yelled to the pilot of the boat to veer off, the rest seized our friends to hurl them in the river.

Before this fiendish purpose could be carried out the blinding glare of a searchlight shot from the vessel upon the raft.

It showed the crew what the natives were doing.

The terrific glare so startled the thieves that they relinquished their hold on Jack, Tim, and Fritz, and clapped their hands over their eyes.

A thrill passed over the young inventor as the vessel came to a sudden pause, for he had seen her name.

It was the Sea Lady.

His own steam yacht.

"Help! Help!" he shouted. "Tim! Fritz!"

"Ay, ay, lad!"

"It's the Sea Lady!"

The next moment several pistol shots rang out from the deck of the steam yacht and two of the Siamese fell wounded.

More shots followed.

Care was taken not to hit Jack and his friends.

Finding themselves attacked a panic overwhelmed the thieves.

Their cries rose widely upon all sides and they began to leap overboard and swim rapidly away.

Within a comparatively short space of time everyone of the rascals had deserted the raft.

The yacht was then hove alongside.

Down came the officer whom Jack had left in charge of her, and cutting the bonds that held the trio he set them free.

"Hurrah!" cheered the crew of the Sea Lady.

They were crowded along the weather bulwarks looking down at their young captain and his friends.

An answering cheer arose from those on the raft.

Then Jack and his companions ascended an accommodation ladder to the deck, and the box of diamonds was hoisted up and stowed away in the young inventor's cabin.

He gave his crew a brief outline of what had transpired.

"Now run the yacht back to where we came from," said he in conclusion, "and we'll take the locomotive apart, and carry her aboard."

"So Silas Redburn was shot?" asked the first officer.

"Yes, and richly merited the death penalty."

"I agree with you, Mr. Wright."

"Cast that raft adrift. We have no further use for it."

This was done.

Then the Sea Lady ran up the river.

She turned into the San-hi, and there upon the embankment they saw the Thunder Gust standing.

The yacht came to anchor.

Work was begun at once.

All the valuables were transferred from the locomotive to the yacht, and the magnificent golden urn, emerald idol, and other relics were safely stowed away.

The crew of the Sea Lady were delighted with the result of the young inventor's journey, for he said to them:

"If we get everything away from here in good shape, boys, upon our return to Wrightstown I shall give you all a good share of prize money."

This offer spurred the men on.

They were systematically divided up into several gangs, and were set to work at dissecting the Thunder Gust.

It occupied three days to do this work.

The locomotive was stored away aboard of the yacht in sections, and the monkey and parrot were confined in cages and were hung up in the saloon of the Sea Lady.

Finally the work was finished.

Nothing more was seen of the thieves who had made the attempt to rob and murder our friends.

"How was it that you happened to be coming up the river at the time those villains were carrying us and the treasure away on the raft?" Jack asked of the first officer.

"We did not remain long at Bangkok," responded the man with a wry look. "And for a very good reason, sir."

"What was it?" asked Jack.

"Silas Redburn gave us some trouble."

"How was that?"

"You know how he saved himself on the lightship?"

"I saw the whole thing."

"Well, he got ashore and came up to Bangkok. Here he made a complaint of attempt to murder him against us."

"Yes—I am aware of that, as some of the king's soldiers tried to arrest us," replied Jack, recalling to mind his first adventure ashore.

"In this country such an attempt is a very serious offense. They tried to put us under arrest and seize the yacht. Had they succeeded she would have fallen into the possession of Phrabat Somdetch Phra Paramender Maha Mongkut Phra Chau Klau Chau Yu Hud."

"Who?" gasped Jack.

"Supremus Rex Siamensium, the First King."

To his own people, the ruler of Siam appeared in a most astonishing array of syllables, for a name.

Indeed, in civilized royal families, the usage of a long string of names is quite a common thing.

"Well, what did you do then?" asked Jack.

"Promptly resisted arrest, and ran up the river. I've been cruising up and down here ever since, waiting for you to return."

"In that case it will be dangerous to pass Bangkok."

"We are liable to arrest there."

"Advantage must be taken of the darkness of night to pass the city then," said Jack. "We can brook no delay now."

When everything was in readiness for departure they lost some time awaiting for a favorable opportunity to get past the city.

The chance soon presented itself.

An unusually dark night fell on the river.

Jack took control of the yacht himself.

Every pound of steam she could carry was put on.

Away she rushed down the river, and finally passing the city with its lights, bells, pagodas, and white elephants, they met with no trouble and finally reached the gulf.

Then she was safe.

The journey back to America began.

A pleasant and uneventful voyage followed.

In due time the beautiful yacht ran into a small bay.

At its head nestled Wrightstown, the residing place of our friends.

Here she came to anchor in a creek at the foot of Jack's grounds.

Our friends debarked, and the vast treasure was carried with the monkey and parrot into the mansion Jack occupied.

Here his young and beautiful wife greeted him.

Jack had carried out the work he had undertaken for the Government, and soon after sent his report to Washington.

The diamonds were sold.

A tremendous sum of money was realized from them, and the young inventor divided it with his friends.

The yacht crew were handsomely remunerated, and dismissed when the Sea Lady was finally taken out of commission and the locomotive was stored away for future use.

Jack placed the ornaments and idol in his house.

His work was done.

But now he had a new duty to perform.

It was the construction of another invention.

We will soon have the pleasure of writing another story concerning the three friends, with this contrivance.

The amazing perils and hairbreadth escapes they finally underwent with the new device were of a most thrilling character.

But let us not anticipate; a perusal of the story soon to appear will suffice to explain what happened to them.

THE END.

Read "THE TEN BOY SCOUTS; A STORY OF THE WILD WEST," by An Old Scout, which will be the next number (246) of "Pluck and Luck."

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